

5 Jordanians killed in Baghdad shelter

AMMAN (J.T.) — Five Jordanians, all members of one family, were among the victims of the Al Amiriyyeh shelter massacre in Baghdad when missiles fired by the U.S. Air Force blasted the shelter Wednesday. The Jordanian victims, who were all female, included a 45-year-old mother, Adibah Ahmad Amer, and her four daughters, Ghada (21), Abir (20), Ghaida' (19) and Rana (14). The husband, Mohammad Khader, who is a professor at an Iraqi university, and their teenage son survived the inferno that engulfed the civilian shelter. The latest figures released by Iraqi officials said 314 bodies have been retrieved from the wreckage of the shelter, most of them women and children.



Iraq's guards 'undeterred' by bombing

NICOSIA (R) — The commander of Iraq's elite Republican Guards said Monday his force was undeterred by U.S.-led allied bombing and would repulse invading troops. Iraq's most battle-hardened soldiers, heavily entrenched in southern Iraq and occupied Kuwait, have been a target for saturation bombing in advance of an expected ground war. Lieutenant-General Iyad Khalifa, in a statement to the Iraqi News Agency (INA) carried by Baghdad Radio, said his force possessed "sophisticated and modern weapons, will defend with honour (Islamic) holy places and repulse invading troops." "The Republican Guards forces... will repulse the heathen alliance led by America in the mother of all battles," he said. "Their tanks and troops will be burned in the desert terrain on which we have gained combat experience for so many years." Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is believed to have spent billions of dollars on the 150,000-strong Republican Guards, an armoured force which is virtually a self-contained army within an army. Held in reserve, it will be Iraq's main line of defence against a ground offensive.

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Gorbachev presents peace plan; U.S. cautious

White House says assault on Iraq will not be stopped

Combined agency dispatches

SOVIET PRESIDENT Mikhail Gorbachev presented new peace plan to Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz during talks Monday and expected a quick response, a presidential spokesman said.

Mr. Aziz told reporters at Moscow's VIP airport before departing that the 3½-hour meeting was "important," and added, "We decided to follow up those talks."

Emerging from the Moscow meeting, Mr. Aziz said "I can speak about the atmosphere, that it was cordial and objective."

When asked if he expected any ceasefire, Mr. Aziz replied: "Well, I cannot elaborate now because the talks between us, and the discussions between us and the Soviet friends are going on, are continuing."

"We expect a reply without delay to these proposals," said Mr. Gorbachev's spokesman Vitaly Ignatenko after the Soviet leader met Mr. Aziz under the Kremlin's glittering chandeliers.

Their talks lasted most of the morning on the 33rd day of the war, Mr. Aziz left immediately afterwards for Iran.

"It (the plan) is now in the diplomatic pouch of Mr. Aziz on board a Soviet aircraft to Iraq," Mr. Ignatenko said. "We expect

a reply without delay to these proposals."

Accompanied by Iraqi Deputy Premier Saadoun Hammadi, Mr. Aziz met first with his Soviet counterpart, Alexander Bessmertnykh, and Yevgeny Primakov, a presidential envoy and Middle East expert. The officials then joined Mr. Gorbachev.

"My impression is that Tariq Aziz was very constructive," Ignatenko said. Mr. Aziz planned to return to Moscow "very soon" after discussing the plan with Saddam Hussein, he said.

Mr. Aziz considered staying in Moscow, but decided to return to deliver the plan in person because telephone lines between the capitals are "unreliable," Mr. Ignatenko said without explaining further.

"He'll have to report personally to Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council," Ignatenko said.

Mr. Ignatenko said the plan was "fully in line with the Soviet position that there should be an unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait." He said Mr. Aziz accepted Mr. Gorbachev's proposals with "interest and understanding."

Mr. Aziz came to Moscow Sunday to explain Iraq's offer on Friday to withdraw from Kuwait.

He explained to Mr. Gorbachev during their meeting that the offer contained "no conditions," spokesman Ignatenko said.

"This is a programme" for negotiations, he said.

U.S. President George Bush and others had rejected the offer because it appeared to link a withdrawal to other Middle East conflicts. The Soviets had welcomed it as a starting point for talks, but also said the conditions could make it meaningless.

The White House reacted cautiously to the peace plan that emerged from the Soviet-Iraqi talks and said the United States would continue the war effort.

Spokesman Martin Fitzwater said U.S. officials had yet to hear from the Soviet Union on the plan.

"I don't think we have enough information to respond," Mr. Fitzwater said, adding:

"All of our hopes at this point are on the conflict in the air and on the ground in terms of pushing Iraq out of Kuwait."

The talks in Moscow Monday had been seen as possibly Iraq's last chance to avert a ground war with the U.S.-led allies.

President Bush declined comment on the Soviet plan.

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Aziz to brief Iranian leader

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQI FOREIGN Minister Tariq Aziz flew to Tehran from Moscow Monday for talks with President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who said a "bright prospect" had emerged to end the Gulf war.

Mr. Aziz is due to brief Mr. Rafsanjani on Tuesday on his talks earlier Monday with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who gave him a plan aimed at averting a devastating ground war.

Mr. Aziz made a stopover in Tehran on Sunday en route to Moscow.

Iran and the Soviet Union have been at the forefront of diplomatic efforts to end the war.

Tehran Radio quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as telling the visiting Burkin Faso foreign minister, Prosper Vokouma, that Iraq had responded positively to the proposals to leave Kuwait.

"The president, having expressed satisfaction at the bright prospect visible in respect of a solution to the problem of the 'Persian' Gulf region said 'Iran's initiatives have fortunately produced positive results,'" Mr. Rafsanjani told the radio.

"Iraq has expressed readiness to withdraw from Kuwait, and concentrated efforts should continue with the cooperation of the other Islamic countries until the forces fighting Iraq also show their good will," the radio quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying.

Mr. Rafsanjani has played a key role in efforts to end the war and sent peace proposals to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Although the conditions attached to Iraq's offer last week were rejected by the allied coalition, Mr. Rafsanjani said peace initiatives "have fortunately produced positive results," according to the report on Tehran Radio.

The radio also quoted Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati as saying Mr. Aziz would confer with officials in Tehran on his way home from Moscow.

Mr. Velayati was quoted as saying Mr. Aziz "is to return to Tehran and discuss the results of his meetings... so that in the future political efforts in this region will continue with more coordination and so that this destructive war is halted as soon as possible."

"Ahmad, son of the late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah

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RIGHT TO RETURN: A Palestinian woman demonstrates in front of the Department of Palestinian Affairs in protest against Israel's refusal to allow Palestinians to return to the West Bank (see page 3).

Iraq reports attacks on allied troops and air raids on itself

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ SAID MONDAY its forces had inflicted casualties on front-line allied troops with a barrage of field missiles, and it reported 130 enemy air raids on its own troops in the past 24 hours.

A military communique broadcast by Baghdad Radio also said that four allied planes had been shot down, but gave no details.

Baghdad radio also carried a commentary denouncing Britain, which on Sunday admitted that one of its bombs missed a targeted bridge last week and mistakenly veered off into the Iraqi town of Fallouja.

"What a lie and what a joke," said Baghdad Radio, saying that 130 civilians were killed in deliberate strike on a residential area.

"This false British justification exposes the behaviour of the old and new imperialists," it said. "World public opinion is called upon the record of British crimes and to condemn this savage action, which truly expresses Britain's civilisation and democracy, which are based on murder and destruction."

It said a British plane was shot down in the bombing.

"The cowardly raid on Fallouja manifested British rancour against Iraq," said the radio commentary.

"British officials claimed that they hit residential apartments because the laser bombs deviated from their course. What a lie and what a joke. This false British justification exposes the be-

haviour of the old and new imperialists," it said.

It called on world public opinion to "condemn this savage action which... explains the congruity of British and American interest to achieve the objective of destroying Iraq."

The Iranian news agency IRNA said Monday allied aircraft are dropping leaflets on southern Iraqi cities, urging residents to leave their home towns.

The agency said wind had blown several of the leaflets to the Iranian border cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr after bombing raids Sunday.

It said they bore pictures of a rocket and people fleeing bombardment with an Arabic-language warning that residents of the areas should leave their towns to avoid being hit.

A military communique said Iraqi soldiers "directed a series of destructive strikes with tactical field missiles at the enemy's positions and concentrations of men and equipment inside Saudi territory."

"A number of enemy sounders were killed or wounded, and equipment, weapons and vehicles were destroyed," the communique said without further elaboration.

During the previous 24 hours, it said, there were 25 air raids on civilians targets in Iraq and 130 on military targets.

Commenting on these war zone raids, the communique said, "the cowardly continued to send their aircraft to strike from a distance a number of military targets in the southern operations sector."

The communique also said four

allied planes had been shot down but gave no details.

In Baghdad itself, air raids sirens sounded during the night, but bombs fell only on the outskirts and officials said there was little damage.

At one location where foreign reporters were shown damage from a previous bombing raid, a woman in black approached one journalist and said softly, "I want to kill Bush. I want to kill Bush."

Allied helicopters rescued an American pilot 60 kilometres inside Iraqi-held territory after he parachuted out of his F-16 fighter, a U.S. military spokesman said in Riyadh Monday.

He said the plane crashed and described the loss as combat related.

The U.S. military said Sunday that U.S. and Iraqi armour clashed at seven points in the desert in the most intense ground fighting since Iraq's attack on a Saudi border town Jan. 30.

It said U.S. attack helicopters captured 20 Iraqi soldiers in battles along the northern border of Saudi Arabia. Two U.S. soldiers were killed by missiles fired by their own side, it said.

A Saudi military officer said the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had joined the air war against Iraqi forces for the first time.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ahmad Robayan said UAE pilots flew Mirage 2000s on four sorties against logistical sites in the Kuwait theatre of operations.

Of the 80,000 allied air sorties, he said the Saudis had flown 5,200, the Kuwaitis 560, the Bahrainis 205 and the Qataris 48.

Bild unveils 'plan'

Combined agency dispatches

THE SOVIET PROPOSAL for ending the Gulf war includes a demand for Iraq's pullout from Kuwait and opposition to any "punitive actions" against Iraq, a German newspaper said Monday.

The Bild newspaper said it had obtained details of the four-point proposal from "informed sources" in Moscow.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz took the proposal with him back to Baghdad, after meeting with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. No details were released by officials in Moscow.

However, Bild said it had learned off the four "central points" of the proposal.

— "Iraq withdraws from Kuwait without pre-conditions, to allow for a 'quick peace'."

— "The Soviet Union supports the maintaining of the 'national structure and the borders of Iraq'."

— "The Soviet Union opposes 'all sanctions' against Iraq, including any punitive action against Saddam Hussein himself."

— "All other problems — the Palestinian question — are to be negotiated."

Bild said its report would appear in Tuesday's edition of the newspaper. The Hamburg-based, mass-circulation newspaper sent its brief report by telex to other news media in advance.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl and President Gorbachev Monday discussed Moscow's plan, a Bonn government spokesman said.

"They obviously talked about the Soviet president's peace plan," spokesman Dieter Vogel told a news conference.

He said Mr. Gorbachev interrupted his talks with Mr. Kohl by telephone.

"The talk between the Iraqi foreign minister and the Soviet president was interrupted due to the telephone call and then continued," Mr. Vogel said. "It was therefore not possible to discuss a final Iraqi position on this Soviet plan."

He said Mr. Kohl and Mr. Gorbachev had agreed beforehand to hold the telephone conversation but Mr. Vogel did not say who placed the call.

The daily Bild said Mr. Kohl and Mr. Gorbachev spoke for 20 minutes and agreed that U.N. resolutions calling for Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait must be fulfilled.

Iran's foreign minister met Monday with his German counterpart as part of last-minute international efforts to end the Gulf war before ground fighting begins.

Ali Akbar Velayati held a luncheon meeting with Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher at the foreign ministry.

He was to meet with Chancellor Kohl later in the day.

Mr. Velayati, while posing for photographs with Mr. Genscher, would not say whether he carried any special proposals from his talks with Mr. Aziz.

Mr. Velayati planned to meet reporters Tuesday before leaving the German capital Wednesday.

Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said there was "the bright prospect" of an end to the war following Baghdad's response to his ideas for solving the crisis.

"Iraq has expressed readiness to withdraw from Kuwait, and concentrated efforts should continue with the cooperation of the other Islamic countries until the forces fighting Iraq also show their goodwill," Tehran Radio quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying.

Two U.S. ships damaged after hitting mines in Gulf

Combined agency dispatches

TWO U.S. WARSHIPS struck floating mines in the northern Gulf Monday, and the navy said seven servicemen were injured. Both vessels were damaged but were not in danger of sinking, officials said.

Initial reports said the USS Tripoli, a helicopter-carrying amphibious assault ship, and the USS Princeton, a two-year-old, high-tech missile cruiser, were operating under their own power after the explosions.

A navy spokesman said three sailors were injured aboard the Princeton — one seriously — and four were slightly injured on the Tripoli.

All those injured on the Princeton were airlifted to another ship for treatment, he said, but those injured on the Tripoli were treated aboard ship.

It was the first mine damage to U.S. vessels in Gulf deployment — from either the month-long war and the preceding five months of enforcing the embargo on trade with Iraq imposed after its takeover of Kuwait.

U.S. officials have said they believe Iraq is dumping floating mines in the Gulf. More than 80 mines have been found and destroyed in the past few months, but none had previously damaged a vessel.

Military sources in London said that apart from mines sown by the Iraqis to defend Kuwait and the approaches to Iraq there are also large numbers of mines left over from the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

A painstaking minesweeping operation will have to be carried out before a U.S. marine task force now moving north up the Gulf can go ashore, military sources said.

That task is likely to be led by five British minesweepers now heading up the Gulf after months of training exercises.

The ships are known as the "Tupperware Taskforce" because they have plastic hulls to reduce the danger from magnetic mines. They are considered to be the most advanced minesweepers available to the allies.

Military sources said the allies face three types of mines —

ground mines laid on the ocean floor, buoyant mines tethered to the seabed and floating mines, which include buoyant mines that have broken free.

U.S. officials say about 150 floating mines have been spotted by allied navies in the past few months. Many have been neutralised but often they are difficult to see. The older mines are encrusted with barnacles, which blur their outline.

False alarms have turned out to be oil drums, sea snakes, rubbish bags, turtles, dead sheep and on one occasion an invalid walking frame.

The best defence against floating mines is often a sailor equipped with a pair of binoculars but even that can lead to some uncomfortable close encounters.

The British destroyer Gloucester last week came within 10 metres of hitting a mine even after it had been spotted by a lookout.

Allied spokesmen have said the Iraqi navy is all but destroyed, but it is still believed to retain a small number of vessels capable of laying mines.

London rail bombs kill 1

Combined agency dispatches

A BOMB EXPLODED at Victoria station 45 minutes after a telephone warning Monday morning, police said. The rush-hour blast killed one man, injured at least 37 others and sent screaming, bleeding commuters running out of the terminal.

Scotland Yard said a man with an Irish accent who claimed to represent the Irish Republican Army (IRA) telephoned a warning 45 minutes before the explosion at 7:46 a.m. (0746 GMT).

One man caught in the explosion lost part of his foot, and three teenagers were among the wounded, police said.

British Rail closed all of its mainline stations in London, halting service which brings half a million people into the capital every day. Connecting subway stations also were closed.

Reporters who were allowed briefly into Victoria station saw trails of blood

leading from the concourse to the front entrance, and knapsacks apparently abandoned in panic.

The warning came after a device similar to the Victoria bomb exploded at 4:20 a.m. in Paddington station, where only a dozen employees were on duty and no one was injured.

Later Monday, all four terminals at London's Heathrow airport were evacuated at 2:45 p.m. following what an airport spokesman called "a non-specific bomb threat." There were no immediate incidents.

Commander George Churchill-Coleman, the head of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist unit, told a news conference that London Transport received this warning at 7 a.m.: "We are the Irish Republican Army. Bombs to go off at all mainline stations in 45 minutes."

He said the warning was passed to the British Transport police, who already were searching all the main railway terminals following the Paddington explosion. But, he said, the bombers knew there would be insufficient time for the "enormous task" of searching all of the stations.

The bomb attacks came 11 days after the IRA fired three mortar bombs at government offices, including one bomb that exploded behind Prime Minister John Major's official residence.

A report by the Iraqi News Agency (INA) from London said the bombings might have been in retaliation for Britain's participation in the Gulf war. But Mr. Churchill-Coleman said: "My personal view is that it has nothing to do with any Arab organisation."

Paddington station is the main terminal for trains from the west, while Victoria, near Buckingham Palace, is the main rail gateway to the south and European destinations.

The IRA has frequently attacked the main Belfast-Dublin rail line in Northern Ireland as part of its campaign against British rule in the province. Most of the explosions are small, and the IRA has said they are intended to draw out the security forces.

In an interview published in the current issue of Republican News, an IRA spokesman who was not identified explained the logic of attacking in Britain: "An action in Britain has many times the effect of a similar action in the six counties (Northern Ireland)."

Fahd: No stop in war

Combined agency dispatches

SAUDI ARABIA'S King Fahd said Monday the Gulf war would continue as long as Iraq controlled Kuwait and deployed troops on its border.

"The fighting will continue, with God's will, as long as its causes remain, namely Kuwait's occupation and the hostile military concentration on the kingdom's borders," the king said.

His remarks were contained in a speech read on his behalf by Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz, who is deputy prime minister and defence and aviation minister, and carried by the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

"The Iraqi leadership can avert... further tragedies and destruction if it takes the full decision to withdraw its army from Kuwait and the kingdom's border," he said.

Speaking to reporters later, Prince Sultan said the meeting in Moscow between Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz with the Soviet leadership "will have no effect on the military situation unless the Iraqi regime follows the correct path," the unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. In his speech, the Saudi

monarch asserted previous efforts towards peace had been given every chance.

"We are not warmongers," the monarch said. "No wise man would want war. Intensive concerted efforts were exerted to avoid the tragedy in which the Gulf region lives today."

King Fahd's speech was delivered to a meeting of Islamic scholars discussing the concept of Jihad (holy war) and support for Saudi Arabia in the Gulf war.

Referring to Arab states sympathetic to Iraq, but without naming them, the king said: "It is extremely painful to see certain Arab leaders going astray and backing injustice and aggression."

Among those attending the meeting was Hamed Al Gabel, secretary-general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ben Abdulah Ben Baz, Saudi Arabia's top cleric, told the meeting: "Our Jihad is for self-defence against the injustice and aggression committed by the enemy of God, Saddam Hussein."

"This Jihad is a duty for Saudi

(Continued on page 5)

Casualty list on 33rd day of war

LONDON (R) — Following is an updated list of casualties and losses in the Gulf war, as reported by the U.S.-led allies, Iraq and Israel at 1800 GMT on day 33 of the war:

	Iraq	U.S.-led alliance
Casualties (military)		
(Iraqi figures)		
Dead	90	53
Missing	(N/A)	(N/A)
(Allied figures)		
Dead	79	74
(includes accidental deaths)		
Captured or missing	1,279	63
Casualties (civilian)		
(Iraqi figures)		
Dead	967 (official)	(N/A)
Injured	up to 7,000 (unofficial)	(N/A)
(Allied figures)		
Dead	480	9
Injured	(N/A)	64
Aircraft lost or missing (includes non-combat losses)	(N/A)	320
(Allied figures)		
	135	41
		(U.S. 29)
		(British 7)
		(Saudi 3)
		(Kuwaiti 1)
		(Italian 1)
Ships sunk or badly damaged		
(Allied figures)	73	None
Israel (civilians)		
Dead	4	
Injured	305	

Stranded Egyptians cross into Jordan after weeks at Trebeil

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The problem of around 2,500 Gulf war refugees — most of them Egyptian nationals — stranded at the Iraqi border for weeks without a special exit permit has been resolved and about 1,800 of them have already crossed into Jordan, Jordanian and international relief officials said Monday.

About 1,400 Egyptians arrived at the Al Ruweished border post by Sunday evening, and 950 of them were directly driven to Aqaba for the ferry home, while the rest stayed overnight at a camp set up by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) before heading for home, said Werner Caspar, the chief ICRC delegate in Jordan.

Another 300 Egyptians passed through Al Ruweished to Aqaba Sunday and 50 remained at the ICRC camp by Monday evening awaiting their turn to be transported to the Red Sea port, he said.

"It appears that the problem has been resolved," said Mr. Caspar, recalling that the ICRC had been sending food

and relief supplies to the stranded penniless refugees at Trebeil since the last week of January. "There are very few people left at Trebeil now," he told the Jordan Times.

The problem at Trebeil developed after Iraq introduced a new system under which every expatriate leaving the country should possess a special permit issued by the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad. Most of those at the border did have an exit visa issued earlier but it was no longer accepted by Iraqi border officials.

Many refugees undertook the perilous journey back to Baghdad to secure the special permit, braving the continuous allied air attacks against vehicles on the highway. But many others either did not have the means to afford a trip or could not find enough fuel for a return journey after the Iraqi government introduced rationing.

There was no immediate credible explanation as to how the problem was resolved at the border; whether Iraq waived the requirement of the special permit.

"We have been told to expect a few hundred people more from Trebeil by Tuesday," said a border official.

Evacuation continues

Meanwhile, repatriation of evacuees already in Amman continued at a brisk pace. A Royal Jordanian (RJ) flight to Muscat was extending the trip to carry 115 Pakistanis to Karachi on Feb. 21; another charter flight was flying home around 185 Sudanese and a group of 139 Yemenis were scheduled to be flown to Cairo, according to Peter Schatzer, chief of mission of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Amman.

Figures collected from the Ministry of Interior and the diplomatic missions as well as IOM indicated that 1,300 evacuees — excluding Egyptian nationals — remained in Jordan as of Monday. These included 360 Sudanese (100 leaving Tuesday and 185 Wednesday), 115 Pakistanis (scheduled to leave Feb. 21), 16 Indians (leaving Tuesday), one Tunisian, one Moroccan, one Sri Lankan, 255 Yemenis (139 leaving Wednesday), and 177 others.

Mr. Schatzer expressed optimism that the bulk of those

remaining would be repatriated home before the end of the week except those who are seeking political asylum in third countries through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These include 374 Somalis, around 70 Iranians, and a few Ethiopians and Sudanese, but not all of them are accepted as refugees by UNHCR.

Mr. Schatzer said plans were being considered for the repatriation of most of the Somalis who can now go home after the political changes in the country following the ouster of the government of President Mohammad Siad Barre.

In the meantime, IOM, which has been handling repatriation of evacuees since August, came under high praise from the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross. "Excellent job," Cornelio Sommaruga told a senior official before he wound up a visit to Jordan Sunday.

The IOM, a governmental agency but not directly affiliated with the United Nations, has repatriated over 150,000 Gulf war evacuees since the crisis erupted in August.

Fundamentalists urge Gulf withdrawal as protests erupt

The Associated Press

FUNDAMENTALIST parties from 13 Islamic countries Monday demanded the withdrawal of all foreign soldiers from the Gulf as anti-American protests erupted in several Muslim nations.

Delegates at a conference hosted in Islamabad by Pakistan's powerful Jamaat-e-Islami religious party issued a declaration labelling foreign troops "forces of occupation" that must leave the region.

Participants at the three-day conference also indicated their intention to start demonstrations March 15 to mobilise support to stop the war.

Delegates from Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Palestine, Pakistan, Sudan, Tunis, Turkey and United Arab Emirates attended the conference. Muslim representatives from Britain and the United States also were present.

Anti-Western sentiment was evident in demonstrations in Egypt, which has sent troops to take part in the multinational force against Iraq.

About 700 university students demonstrated in the southern city of Assiut to demand that Egyptian troops serving in the coalition be brought home.

Meanwhile, about 500 students in Cairo held an anti-Iraq demonstration at Ain Shams University. They called for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

In Sudan, about 500 children, carrying pictures of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, burned an effigy of U.S. President George Bush.

The United States last month emptied its embassy in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, except for two diplomats.

In Nigeria, some parents have started naming newborns after Saddam, according to the state-owned New Nigerian newspaper. Half of Nigeria's more than 100 million people are Muslims. The New Nigerian newspaper has described the Gulf war as *geopolitical* of the Iraqis.

While support is growing for Iraq in much of the Islamic World, Syria's state-run newspapers are carrying passionate testimonials from ordinary citizens supporting their government's opposition to Baghdad.

Every day since the war began on Jan. 17, newspapers have

printed up to three pages of testimonials from doctors, nurses, peasants, workers, teachers, and businessmen accompanied by small photos of the authors.

In Germany, meanwhile, the leader of the country's Jewish community said the Bonn government must use its influence in the Arab World to guarantee the "security" of Israel.

Heinz Galinski, chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, emphasised that Chancellor Helmut Kohl cannot solve Middle East problems simply by handing out money to affected countries.

Germany's constitution prevents it from sending troops outside of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and the major German contribution to the Gulf war has been financial.

Denmark has agreed to a British request for more financial aid for the Gulf war effort but on condition the money be used for humanitarian purposes, a newspaper said Monday.

The all-party parliamentary foreign affairs committee decided to grant 100 million kroner (\$19 million) to pay for field hospitals and a hospital plane for British troops, the Information newspaper reported.

Blasts in Beirut

Two bombs exploded 15 minutes apart in Beirut Monday and police said the blasts were believed part of a bombing spree linked to the Gulf war.

One bomb went off under a car parked near the walled compound of the French embassy on Rue Clemenceau at 6:45 p.m. (1645 GMT), destroying the car and shattering the glass of neighbouring shops. The embassy suffered no damage, police said.

They said the second explosion was detonated near the Bank of Lebanon and the Gulf, which is partly owned by Saudi Arabian financiers. The bank is situated off the city's main Hamra thoroughfare.

Ambulances sped to both sites, but police said they had no report of casualties.

The attacks were the 16th and 17th targeting embassies, banks, and cultural centres of countries fighting Iraq since the war broke out Jan. 17.

No group has claimed any of the attacks.

Fundamentalists attack Tunis ruling party office

TUNIS (AP) — President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali replaced his interior minister Sunday, hours after masked Islamic fundamentalists stormed the ruling party headquarters and attacked people inside with knives, clubs and fire.

The president's office issued a statement announcing the replacement of Interior Minister Abdul Hamid Escheikh by Abdallah Kallel, minister of defence.

It was not clear if Kallel would hold both portfolios or whether Mr. Escheikh would assume new duties.

The statement gave no official reason for the change at the Interior Ministry, which is in charge of the national police, but it came hours after the attack just metres away from the Tunisian parliament buildings.

The ministry reported that at least four people at the Constitutional Democratic Rally's headquarters were injured and hospitalised. Two were listed in critical condition with serious burns.

A ministry statement said that police arrested an unspecified number of assailants, who were later identified as members of the outlawed Al Nahda fundamentalist movement.

According to the ministry, the fundamentalists stormed past a pair of guards Sunday morning at the building, not far from the country's parliament building.

They tied up the guards, doused them with a flammable liquid and set them on fire, the statement said. Two party activists in the building were attacked with knives and clubs.

The ministry did not say how long the fundamentalists occupied the headquarters, nor how many were arrested. Sunday is a non-working day in Tunisia and few party activists were in the building.

An investigation was opened into the incident. There was no indication whether the attackers intended to burn down the party headquarters.

Mr. Ben Ali's government has severely cracked down on Al Nahda in recent months, accusing the movement of fomenting street unrest. But the attack Sunday was bound to raise questions how effective Mr. Escheikh's measures have been.

At least 200 Al Nahda activists have been arrested and held in jail and are to be tried by military courts.

The attack appeared to have no relation to the Gulf war.

Churches to call for Gulf ceasefire, sanctions on S. Africa

SYDNEY (R) — The World Council of Churches is set to call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to the Gulf war and the continuation of sanctions against South Africa, the council said in a draft statement.

The statement also calls on the United Nations to enforce "with equal vigour" its resolutions on Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories, resolutions covering Lebanon and Cyprus, and for an allied withdrawal from the region.

"War promises no lasting solution for the festering wounds of the Middle East, no just, peaceful and durable regional or world order, but rather continued insecurity, pain and conflict," the council, which is meeting in Canberra, said in the statement received here Monday.

"It is never too late to seek peace and a comprehensive settlement. So once again, together, our hearts cry out to the leaders of the nations... cease the bombing still the missiles stop the fighting."

The council linked its call for a ceasefire with a call for an allied troop withdrawal and continued sanctions against Iraq. "Smouldering fires of tension throughout the region have been fanned as countries from the northern limits of the Middle East to the Horn of Africa, Turkey, Iran, Jordan, Sudan and others have been drawn into the sphere of confrontation," the council said.

"Indeed, the whole of the region armed with huge arsenals of the most modern weaponry is a powder-keg which risks exploding."

The statement called for the continuation of sanctions against South Africa until apartheid laws were abolished and a new constitution enshrined the rights of black South Africans.

The council welcomed South African president F.W. de Klerk's decision to repeal key apartheid laws, but said the most difficult phase of the struggle was still to come.

The council indicated it would

criticise the exploitation of South Pacific nations.

"Outside powers are intensifying their exploitation of the region's economic and geopolitical significance," it said, without naming the powers.

"One of the poorer regions of the world, the Pacific states are dependent on outside aid which is too often inappropriate, elitist and short-term."

The council criticised the burning of chemical weapons at Johnston Atoll, south west of Hawaii, and French nuclear testing at Mururoa Atoll in French Polynesia.

"The combination of economic, strategic and military factors has helped to turn the ocean of peace into a nuclear lake and one of the most militarised regions of the world," it said.

The council which represents 316 churches, excluding the Roman Catholic, meets every seven years to formulate religious policy. The council's seventh assembly runs until Feb. 20.

Iraq says it used new missile against Israel

LONDON (R) — Iraq used a new missile to attack Israel Saturday, Baghdad Radio said. "It named the missile as the 'Hijarah. Al. Sijil'" (shale stone), a reference to a story in the Koran in which God sent giant birds to drop shale stones on invaders who attacked the Kaaba, Islam's holiest shrine.

A defence expert in London said the missile was probably a variant of the Scud, the Soviet-made missile that Iraq has used against Israel and Saudi Arabia since the Gulf war began a month ago.

Eric Grove, a British defence analyst, told British Broadcasting Corporation of Scuds — the Hussein and the Abbas.

"They have a small warhead which means they can go further (than a conventional Scud) although they don't carry as much in terms of payload," Mr. Grove said.

"It has been known for a long time that the Iraqis have been working to modify their Scuds. They get Scuds from the Soviet Union, they work on them, they use two to make up the new missiles."

An unmodified Scud-b has a range of 280 km but the Hussein has a range of 600 km, enough to reach Israel and the northern half of Saudi Arabia. The Abbas can reach 900 km.

Scuds were originally used in Iraq's eight-year war against Iran, which ended in 1988.

Iraq said it fired three missiles against Israel Saturday but Israel would only confirm that two landed.

Chief Israeli army spokesman Nachman Shai said there were no reports of casualties or damage.

He would not confirm Iraq's report that one of the missiles was fired against the Dimona nuclear reactor in the southern desert.

Israel's U.S. ambassador apologises for remarks

MIAMI (AP) — Israel's ambassador to the United States has apologised for his controversial remarks last week concerning U.S. aid to Israel.

"I did say some things which diplomats are not supposed to say, and I'm sorry about that," Ambassador Zalman Shoval said. "But when you are in a family you sometimes speak differently than when you speak with strange neighbours."

Mr. Shoval had said in an interview last week that Israel was "getting the runaround" from Washington on \$400 million in U.S. housing loan guarantees for Soviet Jewish immigrants.

U.S. officials have asked for Israeli assurances the money will not be used to settle the newcomers on the occupied territories.

President George Bush sent a cable to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir calling the ambassador's comments "outrageous," and Secretary of State James Baker met with Mr. Shoval to protest.

"Certain squabbles between friends — and mistakes on my part — can be overcome," Mr. Shoval told reporters Sunday after a speech. "The big issues are much more important."

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Sunday that U.S.-Israel relations wouldn't be hurt by Mr. Shoval's blunt remarks.

Mr. Shoval offered his apology

following a general session of the national Jewish community relations advisory council, an umbrella group for more than 100 Jewish community groups nationwide.

During the session, Mr. Shoval said the Gulf war will bolster U.S.-Israeli relations, and that each side will depend on the other to establish post-war stability in the Middle East.

'British detention violates Geneva conventions'

LONDON (R) — The British government's detention and threatened deportation of 47 Iraqi and Palestinian detainees violate the Geneva conventions, lawyers representing some of the detainees said Monday. Britain last month arrested 52 Iraqis and Palestinians. Four were later freed. In a letter to Home Secretary (Interior Minister) Kenneth Baker, the lawyers said: "You will be aware that grave breaches of the convention are criminal acts under domestic law. We are sure you would not wish to take any decision or adopt any procedure which is not consistent with the U.K.'s obligation under the convention." The lawyers said that under the Geneva conventions the detainees were entitled to have their cases reconsidered as soon as possible by an appropriate court or administrative board. A three-member tribunal set up to hear pleas did not meet the requirement, they said. Other lawyers have complained that detainees are not told of the evidence against them before they appear before the tribunal.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

PRAYER TIMES

06:53 Fajr
06:11 (Sunset) Dhuha
11:49 Dhuhir
14:28 'Asr
17:28 Maghrib
18:46 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Swellish Tel. 810740.
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785, 683326.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637480.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 623583, Tel. 623543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.

771331, Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775287.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 65932.

WEATHER

Bulkily supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
A rise in temperatures will occur and some clouds appear at different altitudes.

Amman Min./max. temp. 3 / 18
Aqaba 11 / 25
Deserts 2 / 19
Jordan Valley 10 / 23

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 68 per cent, Aqaba 37 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Sulaiman Khayyat 791880
Dr. Tawfiq Qabir 623029
Dr. Maher Abu Smeih 881635
Dr. Abdul Rahman Jabir 770590
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 670355

Naironkh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 649045

Shamsan pharmacy 637660

DRBD:
Dr. Mohammad Saeed (—)
Al Sharaa' pharmacy (27825)

ZARQA:
Dr. Farah Aqrabawi (—)
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate

Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 845402
Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 63021

Hotel Complaints 603800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage
Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality

Complaints 787111
Telephone Information
(Directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010330
Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100

Amal Hospital 645402
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642816
Al-Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642352
Malhas, J. Amman 636140

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Carter says don't reject ceasefire

NEW YORK (R) — Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter said continued allied demand for a complete surrender as an alternative to peace negotiations would lead to a long, destructive war with Iraq. "We should not reject the option of a ceasefire," Carter said in an essay in the current issue of Time magazine. "To foreclose this possibility and demand complete surrender as an alternative to any peace negotiations... is to ensure a long and destructive war, a fragmentation of the alliance and the likelihood of a destabilised Middle East," said Mr. Carter, who helped negotiate the 1979 treaty between Egypt and Israel. He argued that while a ceasefire would give Iraq time to effect repairs and adjust its forces, those benefits could be "minimised by the terms of the allied announcement of a truce, which might preclude the rebuilding of bridges or the redeployment of armoured units." Mr. Carter said the involvement of the international and Arab communities in peace negotiations would "make it easier for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region once the conflict is resolved."

8 Israeli officers face dismissal

TEL AVIV (R) — Military authorities have recommended dismissal of eight air force officers suspected of involvement in Israel's biggest arms procurement scandal, security sources said Monday. Military Advocate-General Amnon Straschnov recommended to air force chief Avihu Bin-Nun that he dismiss eight officers, including lieutenant-colonels, majors and captains, suspected of concealing evidence in the multi-billion dollar bribery and fraud case or lying to investigators. Brigadier-General Ramit Dotan was arrested last October. He was charged last month with accepting \$12 million in bribes and fraudulent receipts while heading the New York branch of the air force equipment unit. U.S. companies are the main suppliers of Israel's air force. Gen. Dotan is accused of steering contracts to certain manufacturers in return for cash deposits in foreign banks. He is also charged with conspiracy to murder the New York businessman who tipped off Israel's defence ministry. The army would not comment on the latest development in the case. Security sources said some of the eight officers were expected to stand trial while others might only be cashiered. Investigations were likely to continue for years and lead to more arrests.

U.S. Press Club protests against restrictions

NEW YORK (R) — The Overseas Press Club of America said Sunday that U.S. restrictions on reporters were keeping Americans from learning the whole truth about the Gulf war. The group, made up of 1,000 active or former foreign correspondents and news editors, protested at "the harassment of reporters... conflicting reports from the Pentagon and Saudi Arabia (and) the persistent delays in transmission of news reports." In a letter to U.S. Defence Secretary Richard Cheney, the group said restrictions were "preventing Americans from learning many important details about what really is happening in the war zone. On Wednesday, the International Federation of Journalists said in Brussels that the pool system of reporting restricted the free flow of information and discriminated against non-American and non-British journalists."

Germany to give Turkey \$100 million

ISTANBUL (R) — Germany will give Turkey 150 million marks (about \$100 million) in Gulf aid to help it recoup economic losses caused by the Gulf crisis, Treasury officials said Monday. Germany has so far sent 1.5 billion marks (\$1 billion) worth of military aid and equipment to Turkey, a base for U.S. air raids on Iraq. It has sent Turkey 10 Hawk and eight Roland anti-aircraft missile launchers together with airman to operate them. The West has so far promised \$2 billion in Gulf aid to Turkey, the only NATO country bordering Iraq which puts its financial losses caused by the Gulf crisis at \$5 billion.

France TV networks boycott French forces

PARIS (R) — France's four major television networks have agreed to boycott future coverage of French forces stationed in the Gulf, state-owned Antenne 2 channel reported Sunday night. The move, due to take effect Monday, was in protest at a decision by French military officials to bar a pool of French television teams from the front line units, the network said quoting a statement from French television reporters in the Saudi capital Riyadh. Military officials had offered to send army cameramen instead of professional television reporters. It was not clear why the military had decided to ban the television crews from the front line. The statement, signed by representatives from Antenne 2, TF-1, FR3 and La Cinquieme, said a meeting Sunday night with military officials failed to reach a compromise.

B-52 dumps bombs in Mediterranean

WASHINGTON (R) — A B-52 on its way to bomb targets in Kuwait Sunday was forced to dump its bombs into the Mediterranean and make an emergency landing at Palermo, Italy, a Pentagon spokesman said. The plane declared an "in-flight emergency," dropped the bombs and then landed, the spokesman said. The Italian news agency ANSA reported that the plane had developed an electrical fault after taking off from England. It applied for permission to land at Sigonella U.S. naval air base in Sicily but because runways there were too short it was diverted to Punta Raisi at Palermo, the agency said.

Sudanese rebels free three Frenchmen

NAIROBI (AP) — Sudanese rebels have released three Frenchmen who were held for nearly seven weeks after their plane made an emergency landing at the guerrillas' southern headquarters, a French diplomat said Monday. "They are in good health, although they don't feel quite as good as people who have just jumped out of a comfortable bed," said Philippe Oriange, the first secretary at the French embassy in Nairobi. He said Philippe Verdon, Alain Germain and Philippe Lesage were freed Sunday in Kapoeta. They were then flown to Nairobi by UNICEF relief workers. UNICEF delivers relief supplies to both government, and rebel-held areas in southern Sudan and maintains two small aircraft in the northern Kenyan town of Lokichokio, 90 kilometres south of Kapoeta. Mr. Oriange said he had no further details on the Frenchmen and would not say how their release was obtained.

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Palestine, Shousani	6641714	Apple	550 / 480
Shamsan Hospital	669131	Banana	500 / 450
University Hospital	845845	Banana (Mukammur)	450 / 400
Al-Musahar Hospital	6672779	Beans	580 / 500
The Islamic, Abdali	66612737	Cabbage	80 / 40
Al-Ahli, Abdali	6641646	Carrot	160 / 120
Italian, Al-Muhajir	7771012	Cauliflower	280 / 240
Al-Bashir, J. Askarish	77511725	Cucumbers (large)	120 / 80
Army, Marka	891611/16	Cucumbers (small)	280 / 240
Queen Alia Hospital	60224050	Dates	500 / 400
Amal Hospital	645402	Eggplant	200 / 150
ZARQA:	674155	Garlic	1600 / 1400
Zarga Govt. Hospital	(09)883323	Lemon	180 / 140
Zarga National Hospital	(09)991071	Marrow (large)	160 / 100

King visits frontline units

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday visited the frontline units of the 12th Royal Mechanized Division where he was received by the commander and senior officers. Following a briefing on the duties assigned to the units, King Hussein inspected several of the formations in their defensive positions. King Hussein expressed appreciation of the officers and soldiers and pride in their role in defending the homeland. The King thanked them for their efforts and their high morale.



Palestinians renew demands to return to W. Bank, Gaza

AMMAN (J.T.) — For the second time this month crowds of Palestinians prevented by the Israeli authorities from crossing into the occupied Arab territories staged a march in Amman to support their demand for the right to return home.

The Department of Palestinian Affairs at the Foreign Ministry says that around 5,000 Palestinians were barred from entering the occupied territories and that 3,000 more are awaiting their turn to cross.

Most of the Palestinians seeking entry into their homeland have returned here from Kuwait and many of them are penniless, officials said.

The protesters marched from the Department of Palestine Affairs to the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and handed Werner Kasper, the head of the ICRC delegation here, a protest note demanding that bridges across the River Jordan be reopened for the returnees and urging various international organisations and governments to intervene on their behalf and ensure their right to return.

Rateb Amr, one of the department officials said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the Jordanian government was following the matter, with the ICRC as well as other concerned organisations which in turn were taking up the issue with the Israeli authorities.

At least 30 Palestinians have now lost their residency permits, which means they cannot go back to the occupied lands. "Permits these Palestinians have been issued by the Israeli authorities upon leaving their homeland

have expired and they simply cannot go back but the Jordanian government is taking up this matter seriously with the United Nations," said Amr.

The Palestinians earlier this month presented the ICRC with another note with similar demands, but as nothing was done in their case they decided to maintain their protests and continue their endeavours to return, officials said.

Late last month, Dr. Ahmad Qatanani, head of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Palestinian Affairs, said that the Israelis were allowing Palestinians to get out but very few are allowed to return, claiming security measures do not allow the Palestinians to return.

Normally, the Israelis allowed more than 1,000 persons to cross into West Bank every day by this time of the year, rising to more than 3,000 during the summer, but they have reduced the number to less than 50 during the Gulf war, Qatanani added.

The ban on Palestinian people's return coincides with a blanket curfew Israel has imposed on the 1.75 million Palestinians inside the occupied Arab territories.

Quoted by Petra, one of the protesters Monday said that the Israeli authorities have turned her back five times under the pretext that her three-month old baby did not have a temporary passport. But she said, when she acquired this passport the Israelis still did not want to allow her in.

The rest of the protesters, Petra said, held valid residency permits entitling them the right to be permanent residents of the occupied Arab territories.

Islamic medical team departs to help Iraqis

AMMAN (Petra) — An International Islamic Medical Relief Organisation team left Amman for Baghdad Sunday to provide assistance to the civilian victims of the U.S.-led aggression on Iraq.

Lower House of Parliament Member Ali Al Hawamdeh, who is also director of the Islamic Hospital in Amman, said the team comprises five surgeons and four medical technicians. He said 17 trucks loaded with medicines, baby milk, food supplies and medical equipment were sent to Iraq with the mission.

The team, Hawamdeh said, would stay in Baghdad from one

to four weeks, depending on the developments in the situation. Arrangements for the team to work in one of Baghdad's large hospitals were made by the Iraqi health ministry and Red Crescent Society, according to Hawamdeh.

The Amman-based International Islamic Medical Relief Organisation which was established recently will send other medical teams to Iraq in cooperation with the Islamic Hospital, he said.

The organisation was established to provide assistance to victims of natural disasters and wars.

Queen visits Ma'an villages

AMMAN (J.T.) — As part of a series of follow-up visits to development projects being carried out in remote and deprived rural areas, Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday visited the villages of Al Hashimiyyah and Al Husseiniyah in the Ma'an Governorate.

A small bedouin community about 180 kilometres south of Amman, Al Hashimiyyah village joined the Noor Al Hussein Foundation's spinning and weaving project a year ago following the Queen's visit to the area last spring.

The bedouin women of Al Hashimiyyah already have the basic knowledge of weaving and spinning, a skill passed down by their mothers and grandmothers.

This spinning and weaving project comes as an income-generating business-oriented scheme launched to promote home and village-based industries as a means towards improving the quality of life of women and their

families.

It also aims at encouraging women to become wage-earners and decision-makers. It provides them with the raw material and they are given the freedom to choose the colours and patterns, after they have been trained to use more modern techniques, such as the upright looms.

At the beginning of the tour, the director of the district, the chief of the village council and one of the residents delivered welcoming speeches, in which they thanked Her Majesty for the visit.

Her Majesty then proceeded to the weaving centre where she talked to the lady weavers and inquired about their work. They expressed their appreciation for the chance made available to them to upgrade their own individual skills.

After a brief stop at one of the villagers' home the Queen pro-

ceeded to Al Husseiniyah village, where the Tell Burma Cooperative Society runs an agricultural project, formerly established by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1969.

At that time, the project aimed at the settlement of the bedouins in that area on 1000 dunums divided into 40 agricultural units, the most of which is planted with olives, onion, garlic and vegetables. It has two ground wells with a production capacity of 250 cubic metres per hour.

At the end of the visit, Queen Noor called on the house of deputy Faisal Al Jazi, the region's representative at the Lower House of Parliament, where she met with the villages' dignitaries and notables.

Accompanying the Queen on the visit were the governor of Ma'an and Mrs. In'am Al Mufti, the director-general of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation.

Arabiyat receives Tunisian message

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Tunisian parliament is seeking joint efforts with the Jordanian Lower House of Parliament to bring the devastating war on Iraq to an end, and to find solutions for all the Middle East issues, according to a message handed over Monday to House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat by the Tunisian ambassador to Jordan, Mohammad Monji Lahbib.

The message, which came from Speaker of the Tunisian Parliament Mohammad Al Baji Al Sibi, contained in a statement issued earlier by parliament in Tunis, outlining the dangers posed to the Arab and Islamic nations as a result of the ongoing aggression on Iraq.

The aggression on the Iraqi people could expand to include other Arab areas and is designed to sap the Arab World's potentials and destroy its military might and economic infrastructure, ruining any chance of progress and prosperity for the Arab Nation, the statement said.

The U.S.-led aggression constitutes a grave danger with detrimental consequences to the present and future Arab generations of the Arab World, it added.

In view of the ongoing onslaught on Iraq, the Tunisian parliament can only voice its solidarity with the Iraqi people, supporting their steadfastness in the face of the daily air bombardment of civilian centres, the message said.

It said the Tunisian parliament backed all initiatives aimed at settling the crisis by peaceful means including the initiative of the North African Arab countries issued in Morocco.

The message appealed to all peace-loving nations to end the war and help find settlements for the Gulf crisis and the Palestine issue, and urged all Islamic countries to shoulder their responsibility towards their brothers in Iraq.

The message said that the Tunisian parliament was following the developments in the Gulf and will seek joint efforts with Arab parliaments and Arab and African and international organisations to halt the devastating war so as to pave the ground for peace based on justice.

Kingdom receives \$165m EC grant

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan has received about \$165 million from the European Community (EC) — as part of assistance to offset the losses the Kingdom suffered as a result of its adherence to international sanctions against Iraq.

The amount — equivalent to 120 million European Currency Units (ECUs) — represents 80 per cent of European Commission grant allocated to Jordan for 1991. The relevant agreement was signed earlier this month.

"The rest of the pledged assistance will be released as soon as a major portion of the 120 ECUs is utilised," said Christian Falkowski, the delegate in Amman.

According to the aid agreement, the assistance could be used to finance imports of all commodities and equipment except luxury items and military ware by both private and public sectors from EC member states.

The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) has already received the cash transfer, CBJ officials said Monday.

The condition that the aid should be used only for imports from EC member states should not pose a problem for Jordan since 70 per cent of its imports come from the Community, economists noted.

Mr. Falkowski rejected suggestions in the media that the Community might follow the example of Washington and review its aid to the kingdom as 'punishment' for what is perceived as Amman's support for Iraq in the Gulf war.

"Our assistance is extended to Jordan to compensate for its losses resulting from its observance of the sanctions against Iraq," he said. "There is no other consideration whatsoever. The aid is totally non-political."

Japan, another major donor to Jordan, has also affirmed that it has no intention to reconsider its aid and loan commitments to the Kingdom.

Mr. Falkowski and other Western diplomats have said that they were fully satisfied that Jordan was strictly abiding by the sanctions against Iraq, imposed in August following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

They also said that Europe is very keen in ensuring continued stability and security in Jordan.

"Jordan has always been a moderating factor in the Middle East and any serious harm to its

economic stability would definitely have immediate consequences on the delicate political equilibrium in the region," according to a senior European diplomat.

The EC aid to Jordan comes as special financial assistance to make up for the Kingdom's losses as a result of its compliance with the sanction on Iraq, its major trading partner until the invasion.

European diplomats have also said that they understand Jordan's precarious economic position and expressed tacit approval of the Kingdom's oil imports from Iraq in lieu of Baghdad's debts to Amman.

Iraq's debts to Jordan stood at \$310 million in August 1990, and Baghdad had been repaying \$12 million in monthly instalments.

But Washington argues otherwise and is not willing to accept that the sanctions committee had okayed Jordan's oil imports from Iraq. And it was one of the initial reasons given by the Bush administration for repeated attacks on Jordanian oil tankers on the main Iraq-Jordan highway.

However, Washington's "review" of \$55 million in aid to Jordan for fiscal year 1990-1991 came after Washington interpreted a speech by His Majesty King Hussein last week as an open declaration of support for Iraq.

Jordan has rejected this contention and said that its call for an end to the Gulf war and a peaceful resolution of the conflict did not indicate any shift from its firm position of neutrality.

With the receipt of the EC aid, the total assistance the Kingdom has received or been pledged in response to its request for compensation went up to \$1.15 billion; this includes \$700 million in soft-term loans from Japan, \$235 million from Germany, \$38 million from Italy, \$23 million from Canada, \$20 million from France, and \$18 million from the Netherlands.

Aid has also come from Sweden, Belgium, Denmark and Taiwan.

In the short term, external aid will be used to boost Jordan's foreign exchange reserves and help the country's balance of payments. But His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has repeatedly said that long-term programmes "will be in place by the year 1992 to address the Kingdom's basic economic problems."



INSPECTION: Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Monday toured civil defence and voluntary groups centres in the Zarqa and Amman governorates and inspected various arrangements taken by their members to deal with any emergency. Accompanied by the Zarqa governor and other officials from the ministries of health and education, the Princess called at girls schools and met leaders of girl guide movements who are contributing to the general effort and heard a briefing on the measures taken by students to deal with evacuation of residents, rescue operations, fire fighting and first aid services. The Princess praised those in charge of these operations and said she was impressed with the zeal displayed by the youth of Jordan to offer service to their country in time of need. The princess who is president of the Jordanian Scouts Movement, heard a briefing by the directors of scouts and girl guides movements on the various voluntary activities in schools and readiness to offer services to the local community in emergency hours.

Pakistan and Turkey stop visits by parliamentarians

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A trip to Pakistan and Turkey by a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation was aborted Monday, only hours before it was scheduled to start when the Pakistani and Turkish governments apologised for not being able to receive its members.

Member of the Palestinian team in the delegation, Anwar Hijazi, said that the delegation, which grouped three Jordanians and three Palestinians, had to return to Amman whilst on its way to the airport after learning that the two governments had changed their minds about the visit.

"The ambassadors of Pakistan and Turkey had visited the Palestine National Council (PNC) ear-

lier and warmly welcomed the delegation's visit to Islamabad and Ankara and told the head of the Palestinian group, Abdul Hamid Al Sayeh, that they had made arrangements for the visit," Hijazi said.

An official statement by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that the government of Pakistan changed its stand at the last moment and added that the visit could not take place because "Pakistani government officials were pre-occupied with previously set engagements."

According to Petra, the Pakistani and Turkish governments had earlier welcomed the visit by the joint delegation which had planned to hold meetings with government officials, parliamentarians and heads of political groups and popular organisations to discuss means of halting the Gulf war.

According to Hijazi, the Pakistani embassy, which had issued visas to the Jordanian and Palestinian members of the delegation, said that another date for the visit would later be fixed.

But according to Hijazi, the Turkish embassy here declined to issue visas to the Palestinian members, and the Jordanian side decided not to go in solidarity with the rest of the delegation members.

The delegation was scheduled to have spent three days in Pakistan before taking another three-day trip to Ankara, Hijazi said in a statement to the Jordan Times.

The Jordanian team in the joint delegation was to be headed by Dr. Ishaq Al Farhan and to include Dr. Ali Faqir, and Fuad Khalafat, while the Palestinian team which was led by Sheikh Sayeh included Abbas Zaki and Mr. Hijazi.

UNDRO needs more supplies

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Disaster and Relief Organisation (UNDRO) says that it faces a shortage in tents and home utensils required for the evacuee camps set up in Jordan although other facilities are available.

UNDRO office director here Hans Einhaus said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the question of shortages will be included in a report he plans to submit to the UNDRO head office in Geneva, noting also other aspects related to the accommodation of the evacuees.

Einhaus, who said he was leaving for Geneva Tuesday and re-

turning by the weekend, noted that since the outbreak of the Gulf war on Jan. 17 his organisation dealt with 24,500 evacuees of different nationalities who converged on the camps set up in Jordan with help from the Jordanian government.

The report also voices appreciation to the Jordanian government and the various international organisations for their cooperation to offer accommodation to the evacuees fleeing the Gulf zone and arranging for their repatriation.

While U.N. organisations provided funds to finance the operations the Jordanian government

offered health, transport and other facilities, Einhaus noted.

He said that the report outlines the operations of the various U.N. organisations in the country and the amounts of contributions offered to these organisations to carry out humanitarian services. Einhaus said that he expects an increase in the number of evacuees in the coming stage of the war and said that arrangements are being made with Royal Jordanian (RJ) to organise weekly flights to Cairo, Larnaca, London, Muscat, Paris, Tripoli, Rome, Tunis and Vienna to help in the process of repatriating evacuees.

Public transportation gains popularity Ortega leaves

AMMAN (J.T.) — Government decision to restrict the use of private cars in order to save gasoline taken earlier this month has boosted the operations of the Public Transport Corporation (PTC) prompting it to put into use 50 new buses to carry the extra passengers, according to PTC Director-General Sulaiman Al Hababeh.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Hababeh said that since the outbreak of the Gulf war only 30 per cent of the capacity of PTC buses — which cover routes in Amman and link the capital with a number of surrounding towns — estimated to have been operative. But two weeks after the application of the new government measure the use rose to 50 per cent.

A number of changes had to be introduced to the bus routes. As all the 50 newly acquired buses, the PTC also took advantage of 50 buses from the Jordan Express Tourist and Transport Company (JETT) and buses from Royal Jordanian (RJ) under special agreements, Hababeh noted.

He said that once the changes were introduced and the new additional buses were put into use, congestion of passengers — as witnessed in the first few days — has vanished and procedures are going smoothly and without complications, Hababeh noted.

However, other matters related to transport and the PTC are still pending solution by the Ministry of Transport, although the PTC management continues to take citizens' remarks and find solutions for any problems that might occur, Hababeh said.

According to the PTC chief, PTC buses reach Salt, Zarqa, Madaba, Mahees and Russeifa in addition to the capital and its outlying regions.

Hababeh said he could not predict any further increase in the number of buses along these routes but attention was now focused on improving transport services within the Amman region itself and covering all routes in a more regular manner.

Upon introducing the recent regulations allowing private cars to run on alternate days, the government said that the move was expected to save up to 35 per

cent of the total normal fuel consumption.

Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources official declined to give any figures about the amounts of gasoline and other oil products saved, but noted that daily reports about the situation were being sent to the prime minister's office.

Jordan introduced the measure, which affects 175,000 cars,

following the bombing raids on the oil tanker trucks bringing crude oil from Iraq resulting in the destruction of 31 trucks and the death of at least 14 people including drivers.

Not only did the public opt for the PTC buses to commute to work, out road accidents were reported by the traffic department to have dropped by nearly one half.

New tanker to bring Yemeni oil next week

AMMAN (Agencies) — Jordan is sending a newly purchased tanker to collect 100,000 tonnes of crude oil from Yemen to make up for the expected shortage resulting from reduced supplies from Iraq, according to senior officials here Monday.

The decision to purchase the oil tanker was taken at a cabinet meeting on Feb. 5 the day when a new measure to ration gasoline went into effect, allowing private cars to run on alternate days to help save at least 35 per cent of

the total oil consumption.

According to Jordanian officials quoted by Reuters news agency a letter of credit has been opened with Yemen to buy the oil at market rates. The ship, which will be loaded in the next five or six days, is expected to be stationed permanently at Aqaba port to serve as a storage vessel.

The government opted to buy the oil tanker and secure oil from sources other than Iraq following the allied bombing raids on oil tanker trucks along the route.

Ortega leaves

AMMAN (Petra) — Former Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega left Amman Monday after a several-day visit to Jordan during which he met His Majesty King Hussein.

Ortega, who heads the International Movement for Peace, has announced in Amman recently a six-point proposal to solve the Gulf crisis and bring to an end the hostilities in the region.

The proposal calls on the Security Council to authorise the Secretary General to announce his readiness to dispatch U.N. observers to witness the implementation process of the solution launched with Baghdad's announcement of its intention to withdraw from Kuwait. It adds that territorial disputes between Iraq and Kuwait must be settled in accordance with the rules of international law.

As soon as the peace process begins, all foreign forces deployed in the Gulf since Aug. 2 will leave in a time frame not exceeding the time of their deployment, the proposal states.



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Gorbachev's new plan can make the difference

HAVING HELD crucial and "constructive" talks in Moscow, Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and Deputy Prime Minister Saadoun Hammadi went back to Baghdad yesterday carrying with them a Soviet plan for peace in the Gulf. The fact that the two Iraqi leaders have carried back to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein a definitive peace formula for the Gulf crisis suggests there is now room for guarded optimism that Baghdad's Friday announcement accepting U.N. Security Council Resolution 660 is bearing fruit after all. The direct involvement of President Mikhail Gorbachev in the search for a genuine peace process to resolve the Kuwaiti conflict signifies that Moscow not only views the situation with greater gravity now, but also shares with Iraq and Iran growing fears about continued Western military presence in the Gulf in the future.

There is little doubt that the Soviet Union has become more aware by the day of the implications of destroying Iraq and rendering it unstable. The geographical proximity of Iraq to the southern border of the Soviet Union, and the fact that most of southern republics in the country are already hotbeds for turmoil and secessionist movements that the West is accused of fomenting, must have prompted the Soviet leadership to move to contain what can be seen as a grand conspiracy being hatched by certain Western capitals. Besides, Moscow is fast running out of friends and allies in the world and when its southern flank becomes threatened by an unrestrained Western military and political presence, it has to act and promptly so. It can be assumed, and safely perhaps, that the package deal that President Mikhail Gorbachev has transferred to his Iraqi counterpart contains additional elements that provide opportunities for Moscow to act swiftly on protecting its strategic interests. The Soviet Union wants to stay in the big league and now is the time for it to show that it can still call some shots in the international arena. Accordingly Moscow would also seek a role for itself in tackling other disputes of the Middle East, especially the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Soviet Union needs to score successes in its diplomacy and the Gulf crisis offers it a grand opportunity to do just that. It remains to be seen whether the Gorbachev plan is balanced enough for Iraq to accept it. We surely hope that this is where the missing link for peace in the Gulf will be found.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

BY REJECTING the Iraqi initiative to settle the Gulf crisis, the foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria and the Gulf states have thus expressed their rejection of a formula aiming at repatriating the Kuwaitis, the Palestinians and the inhabitants of South Lebanon, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily. In the rejection which these foreign ministers expressed in Cairo last week, offers a service to world Zionism which has long desired to see their occupation of Palestinian land endorsed and approved by the Arab states, the paper noted. U.S. Secretary of State James Baker immediately expressed his delight over the foreign ministers' decision because America's views are being supported by certain Arab countries, not only with regard to Iraq, but also in relation to Washington's future plans for the region, the paper continued. It said that these Arab countries' stand means simply that the United States can count on its Arab allies and agents once the time has come to impose the so-called "new world order" which in reality means maintaining U.S.-Israeli hegemony on the Arab World. The United States which conspired with Israel to formulate the Camp David Accords, is now intent on implementing the agreement which can best serve world Zionism's interests, said the paper. The paper called for a holy war to be waged by Muslim nations against the U.S.-Zionist alliance, and against America's Arab agents whose declared intention is to subdue the Arab nation to the will and the desire of the United States and its strategic ally in the Middle East.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily Monday comments on the role which the Soviet Union can play in the peace process and the benefits it can reap as a result. Jumaa Hammadi says that Moscow carries a real international weight and can play a role designed to achieve peace no less powerful than the U.S. onslaught; and can balance the ongoing aggression with a serious thrust towards re-establishing world peace based on justice. Such peace, the writer notes, serves the Soviet Union itself since Moscow does not wish to see America's influence expanding to reach Soviet borders; and should Soviet bids bear fruit, Moscow's former status as of champion of world peace will be restored. Furthermore, by halting the ongoing aggression on Iraq, Moscow would appease the numerous Soviet Islamic republics whose leaders had been voicing concern over the continued air raids on their brother Muslims in Iraq, says Hammadi. He also draws attention to the fact that the Soviet military have been exerting pressure on Gorbachev to stop the war, voicing real concern over the course of events in the region and demanding that Moscow re-examine its position. By intervening to achieve peace, the writer says, Moscow can achieve benefits no less important than those that serve the interests of the Arab World.

By Dr. Shamil Kubba

THE RECENT statement by the Iraqi Revolutionary Council that Iraq was willing to comply with United Nations Resolution 660 providing certain conditions are met, is an encouraging development, and marks the first time since the early days of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait that the Iraqi leadership has accepted the principle of withdrawal. However, the Iraqi communiqué once again highlights the large gap that exists between the warring parties - a gap which must be bridged before any true and honourable truce can be implemented.

Many peace initiatives have recently been put forward in an attempt to achieve a means of stopping the carnage taking place in Iraq and Kuwait. Most blueprints like that of Pakistan's Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, were designed more to placate local frustration than to seek real solutions. They are naive and/or unrealistic in their content, with no serious attempt to examine the conflict with the impartiality needed. They were thus doomed to failure, even before the ink had a chance to dry.

In searching for a peace scenario acceptable to the Iraqi leadership and President Saddam Hussein in particular, a proposal must consist of a strategy that addresses the legitimate grievances and claims of the Iraqis which most proposals found convenient to ignore. Many initiatives left no incentive for withdrawal or reconciliation, leaving one to wonder of the sponsor's intentions. As Crown Prince Hassan rightly pointed out during a "Face the Nation" interview, "Iraq would never surrender. When the United States says no face-saving, no linkage, no negotiations, and then unleashes this tremendous force of destruction, capitulation is simply not of the Iraqi style, nor is it the Iraqi leadership style."

We are constantly reminded by the Iraqi leadership that any draft plan needs to include certain fundamental elements without which no peace process is possible. This is not only for saving face, or to ensure

the Iraqi government's survival but also to ensure an honourable solution that will satisfy the minimum goals and aspirations of the Iraqi people. Additional ancillary elements could complement these essentials, thereby making the peace package more comprehensive and appealing, thus increasing its chances of success. This suggests that any master-plan that is drawn up should consist of two main sections, that containing the essential elements and another containing the supplementary ones.

Elements essential to any peace treaty would have to include the following: That Iraq's ownership of the Rumaila oil fields be publicly acknowledged. However, since neither the Kuwaitis nor the British really dispute this fact, one is not asking much. The reality of the situation is that until August of last year, the Kuwaitis have continuously and systematically been infringing Iraq's sovereignty by illegally and deviously drilling diagonal wells into the Iraqi side of the border and pocketing the money themselves. Iraq has on several occasions tried to dissuade the Kuwaitis from pursuing this practice but without success.

By Abdullah Hassanat

THE U.S. response to Iraq's Feb. 15 initiative is an indication of either sheer stupidity on the part of the U.S. leadership or a predetermined intent to really destroy Iraq as many people contend.

Why stupid? Because the U.S. and its allies, basically the West, have a golden opportunity in the Iraqi initiative to achieve most of their declared objectives. They would have "liberated" Kuwait, secured their oil interests, brought about the long-desired-for peace in the region, and maintained the Western "way of life." One additional, very important advantage for accepting the Iraqi offer, is that the West, particularly the U.S., would

A synthesis for peace

Iraq be granted sovereignty over the two islands, Bubiyan and Warbah, either as an outright gift or on a long term lease, thereby affording Iraq a suitable outlet for its oil and trade, particularly since it previously conceded half the disputed Shat al Arab waterway to Iran shortly after its invasion of Kuwait.

A sincere attempt by the West and the United States in particular to address the Palestinian/Israeli problem in the context of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The hype permeated by the Israelis that the perpetuation of Israeli control of Arab territory is necessary for strategic depth to ensure their security has been totally disproved. In an age where war is becoming increasingly dominated by high technology and where long-range ballistic missiles are playing an increasingly pivotal role, strategic depth has lost its value. It seems more logical therefore, for the Israelis to seek peace than maintain their state of war which only feeds the hostility of Arabs and Muslims everywhere. The world must use a single measure; double standards need to be shed aside.

Because of the intense dis-

taste for the Sabah family by many Arabs and Muslims, it is unlikely that the Iraqi leadership will accept their reinstatement. Free elections should be held within say, six months of a cease fire to help solve this very thorny problem. An arrangement can be arrived at with any elected government to safeguard the billions of dollars currently invested in the West.

Already much dissension is surfacing amongst the Kuwaiti opposition who accuse the Kuwaiti government-in-exile of renegeing on their initial pledge to restore parliament, dissolved in 1986 as well as the 1962 constitution. Former speaker of the Kuwait national assembly, Ahmed Al Sa'adoon who is also leader of the opposition, points out that if the deposed Sabah family is returned to power, a martial law government will be set up instead. Moreover, the Sabah family has taken over control of the Kuwait Investment Co. which has foreign assets of over \$120 billion and which is helping to finance the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq.

Needless to say, few Arab leaders or people in the Arab world share any love for the Sabah family and their depar-

ture from the political spectrum will not be missed - in fact it would be most welcome and should be encouraged. The Sabahs are looked upon as deceitful, grossly arrogant and self-indulgent rulers, with little compassion or earnest desire to serve either their own populace or that of the Arab Nation at large.

Additional ancillary elements to create a more comprehensive package could include:

— Withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Gulf within a specified time-table. President Bush and Prime Minister Major have always maintained that allied troops will leave the region as soon as the war is over. Arab or United Nations troops in the role of a security or buffer force (where a nation feels threatened) could then be invited to the region to replace them.

An effort be made to resolve the great disparity between wealthy nations such as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf sheikdoms, and the poorer non-oil producing nations such as Jordan, Sudan, Tunisia and Somalia. One method may be for the setting up of an Islamic fund for development and reconstruction which could be fi-

nanced from oil revenue income, say by the allocation of 15-20 per cent of the oil revenue of rich nations for this purpose. Such a contribution to the less well-to-do nations will not only assist in their development, gradually adding cohesion to the Arab Nation and the region as a whole, but it would also help ease much of the entrenched anger that has been fermenting over the years by these deprived people. It would moreover, go a long way in helping to alleviate the economic and social injustice the people of these non-oil producing countries are enduring.

America and its allies should pledge financial and technical assistance towards the immediate reconstruction of Iraq and Kuwait, for which they bear total responsibility. Furthermore, a separate fund should be set up to compensate the families of innocent civilians killed in the war or who had their property damaged or destroyed. These would include Iraqis, Kuwaitis, Saudis, and Israelis and others. The Palestinians should also be compensated for the atrocities committed by the Israelis since 1948.

Declaring the Middle East (including Iraq and Israel) a mass destruction-free zone, thus requiring the removal of all weapons of mass destruction from the region, including nuclear, bacteriological and biological weapons. Israel and other countries must be induced to sign such a nonproliferation treaty. To prevent Israel from evoking the security pretext for her aggression, America and/or her allies can sign a formal defence treaty with Israel to guarantee her security within internationally recognised boundaries.

Let us hope that during his latest trip to Moscow the Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, will have been able to convince President Mikhail Gorbachev to search and press for a just solution. One thing we must never forget: In war nobody wins and the alternative to an honourable solution is no solution at all.

The writer is an Iraqi author, artist, architect. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

Golden opportunity for West in Iraqi offer

have reached a settlement without shedding any more European and American blood or wasting more U.S. taxpayer money.

If the U.S. had agreed to a ceasefire and opted for peace, U.S. troops could go home sooner, not necessarily in body bags, the U.S. president's popularity would soar, and the Soviet Union, apparently about to reverse course, would be kept neutral. By pursuing war still further, the U.S. leadership stands to lose its credibility, be labelled a liar, and incur the wrath of Arab and Muslim masses for ever. Since the declared objective of the war, Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, could be achieved without continuation of the carnage, then the war itself,

which is against humanitarian law, will no longer be an acceptable tool of conducting relations with this region. Iraq's offer cannot be merely dismissed as a "hoax." The Iraqi leadership, after much destruction and bloodshed, has a genuine interest in peace.

In addition to the liberation of Kuwait, the U.S. has achieved most of its other objectives: a presence in the region, a say in its future and a secured oil flow. The U.S. can even reverse the tide of resentment and hatred for the U.S. among the Arab and Muslim peoples by simultaneously working for a settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and for a better distribution of wealth in the region. By taking Iraq's offer for democracy in Kuwait,

the Americans could even go further and encourage democratic movements in the region, if that is what the Americans truly want. All these, and more, are the advantages that an early end to the war could bring to the region. The U.S. has a chance in this experience that will probably never present itself again. The choice is clear: the U.S. can either opt for peace, comprehensive peace for the region, and therefore win Muslim, Arab and Jewish hearts, or alternatively it can opt for continuing war and by the end of it have all the region boiling in anger and hatred for the West and its American leadership.

The writer is on the staff of the Jordan Times.

LETTERS

U.N. ready to help

To the Editor:

I have read with great interest the article on page three of Monday's issue of the Jordan Times, entitled "UNDRO chief says U.N. may compensate families of air raid victims," and appreciate very much your reporting on the humanitarian relief efforts provided by the U.N. system to evacuees and refugees.

In order to avoid any misunderstandings, I should however note that I did not speak of any U.N. compensation for families of war victims, but stressed that the U.N. may consider any request from the government of Jordan for help to returnees in addition to its humanitarian assistance provided to third country evacuees. I shall also point out that I referred to the Geneva conventions as providing for protection of the civilian population during armed conflicts and not the U.N. charter.

Hans Einhaus,
Senior United Nations
Emergency Manager in Jordan.

America's dilemma

To the Editor:

IN the letters to the editor page of the reputable American newspaper, the Boston Globe, a letter was published that showed innocence, concern and above all confusion. My own confusion, however, centred around its publication as many comments, viewpoints and analysis do not see the light of day in the "free" American press. Any criticism of Israel, even if reasonable and constructive, comes under serious scrutiny by the editor who invariably opts to censoring such articles. This letter showed growing awareness among Americans to the unreasonable alliance between the USA and the state of Israel. The blind support Israel constantly demands and claims can no longer pass unnoticed. The letter went to say:

"It makes one wonder why the U.S. tax-payer must continue to pour \$3 billion a year into a small country. What do we get out of it? Surely we're not trying to win Israel over to 'our side.' Israel is already there. Are we trying to rebuild their economy, or help them overcome some recent disaster? Just what is all this money for? If it cannot be stopped, then I suggest we seriously consider making Israel our 51st state. If we're going to support Israel, then we should have a say in how it is run."

Let us focus our attention to the Iraq-Iran Gulf war. This was a war between two countries that were not exactly sympathetic to the U.S. There was increased tension in both countries as it became evident there was U.S. "indirect and covert involvement and interference in this war. Electronic and satellite intelligence (later claimed to have been supplied intentionally erroneous i.e. doctored) was given to both Iraq and Iran. This led to the extended duration of this war with enhanced human casualties and tremendous material destruction. By playing both sides, the U.S. was making its diplomats and ordinary Americans vulnerable to reprisals. It was also fuelling the anti-American sentiments in both countries with marked militancy and fundamentalism in the Middle East as a whole. This was clearly not serving the best interests of the U.S. particularly on long-term policy basis.

According to John Ranelagh in his book "The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA."

"American interests were in fact done great harm by the war

and by U.S. involvement. Israeli, not American, interests were better served by the continuation of the Gulf war. If both Iran and Iraq bleed themselves dry in a war, the principal winner is Israel."

This is one example of this absurd behaviour whereby Israel's interests always superseded America's own national security interests. Awareness to this among Americans is growing, we hope!

It is important to note here that Israel concentrated constantly on weaving itself in the fabric of U.S. policy-making apparatus. It understood the importance of this and wanted to ensure that Israel shall never be discarded. It employed many tactics and moved many resources. It dominated lobby and interest groups. It controlled the media, through American Jews, of course. It destroyed the chances of leadership roles among many concerned good Americans. It bought conscience as it fed hatred to Arabs. It ridiculed those who dared to protest and labelled them racist and anti-semitic. And above all, Israelis showed apparent willingness to work for U.S. objectives after they have controlled the factors that would eventually result in constant service to Israel's objectives and interests.

It is interesting to note in this context that while the U.S. showed little patience with any signs of discontent to U.S. policy by its Arab partners and friendly nations, it tolerated all actions of defiance and even deceit and treachery by Israel. It was apparent that Israel trusted no one, and this complex attitude led to many abhorrent acts against its saviour and mentor, the United States of America. Israel used American aid to buy information, use people, gather intelligence reports, recruit officials, and employ spies against the U.S. itself. The Pollard case is probably not the last living example to this. Pollard took large boxes of classified documents from the Pentagon and delivered them to Israeli agents of the Mossad (the Israeli Intelligence Agency). These documents contained very serious information about U.S. defences. However, after Pollard's arrest, Israel simply apologised for this spying and labelled it "unauthorised." It claimed this was unknown to anyone in the Israeli cabinet. George Shultz, then U.S. secretary of state, and a great servant of Israel's many and varied interests, accepted the apology with "great understanding."

He covered-up the whole incident and claimed a month later that Israel had returned all stolen documents. The irony remained that after this matter was "closed," the U.S. resumed sharing intelligence with Israel in all fields, on all levels, and in an enhanced capacity. The U.S. was truly "masochistic" in nature!

The more Israel harmed and betrayed the U.S., the more the latter drew satisfaction in maintaining strategic links and alliance with the "traitor." Meanwhile, good Americans remained dormant!

The current war in the Gulf is the last in the series of Israeli interests best served by American involvement. This is a war masterminded by Israel, financed largely by Arabs, carried out on Arab land, fought by an American-Western-Arab coalition, and drawing to a conclusion that best serves Israel. I could never think of a better, more satisfying theatrical script than this one that Israel wrote. Its success though, has centred around the naivety of the good Americans and the gullibility of the remaining few. The forces of evil dominated the U.S. decision-making process. Americans are being killed, American interests destroyed, and anti-American sentiments rising to alarming levels. And all for the benefit of one — the wicked state of Israel. It is interesting to note that this war is fought in the pretence of liberating Kuwait (Iraq's so called 19th province) while the true motives are to protect Israel and succumb to the interest of this 51st state.

It is nice to sleep as this rests the body. It is nicer to deep-sleep as this rests the soul and initiates dreams. But, nicest of all is to wake-up as this reminds one he is still alive. Good Americans have slept deeply for too long and dreamt of this "evil" to simply wash

away. It is time to wake up and rid America of this cancer — the Jewish influence that serves no one, but the state of Israel. Because, if not, you may as well call it the 51st state, and rest in peace. Good luck, good Americans!

Izzat Dajani,
Amman.

Hit them where it hurts

To the Editor:

Accepting the fact that Jordan is not in the good books of the West due to its nationalistic and neutral position, there is every reason that Jordan would still face further pressures and even direct attacks on the country's national interests.

Many Jordanians are continuing to keep their savings outside the Kingdom.

Though, I am not trying to interfere with the people's personal matters, I still would like to advise these people that there are alternatives to placing Arab money in countries that clearly desire our destruction and spend endless days and nights planning our future for us.

I would like these people to consider taking their money out of Britain, America, France, and any other country that targets us. The alternative should be to place their money in Jordanian banks. If that did not satisfy their security needs then they can place their money in an Arab bank either in Switzerland or a better choice Austria; basically a neutral country.

Austria is a neutral country by constitution and its banking laws are generally speaking better than those of Switzerland. I am not advertising Austrian or any Arab bank. Rather urging I am taking Arab money out of the countries that have targeted us. Just like the West has frozen all the accounts of Iraq and Iran in the past, Jordan could also be treated in this manner for any pathetic reason they may see fit.

The best weapon for not being beaten is by being prepared. No matter how great or how little the value of Jordanian savings abroad is, the message will be strong enough.

We have to remember that placing our money in the enemies' hands gives them the power to play around with us and make us kneel. So let's take our money out of their banks now while we can.

Wajih Murad,
Amman.

Big joke by some Arabs

To the Editor:

On Feb. 17, the Washington Post reported that eight Arab countries allied with the U.S. in the coalition against Iraq proposed a set of sweeping defence and economic arrangements that they said would improve security in the Middle East after the war in the Gulf ends. Oman reportedly objected to the arrangements, which excluded Jordan (among other Arab countries) from receiving any Arab financial aid in the future and excluded the PLO from any role in solving the Palestinian problem. The Post report left me wondering whether the eight Arab states meeting in Cairo (except for Oman perhaps) might have not also decided what the new world order should look like and exactly when the Americans can leave or stay in the Middle East area.

Salim Abdo,
Amman.

Sponsors hope JTV and radio can help in project

New call service giving comfort to Palestinians

By Daoud Kuttab

JERUSALEM — A new service has sprung up in the occupied territories with the aim of giving comfort to Palestinians. "Call and be Comforted" is the name of a new hotline that has begun since the beginning of the Gulf war. Originally started by the personal initiative of a number of psychologists from Bethlehem University, the service has been widened and has been taken over by the Palestinian Counselling Centre in Jerusalem. It is now running shifts for psychologists and social workers from the area on a given day a week basis.

Callers to the new hotline range from people who do not

know how to wear their gas masks to people with questions about politics. But, according to the sponsors of the programme, the bulk of the calls come from parents who have problems with frightened children, "when the siren is sounded, our son clings to his father and refuses to let go," said a caller last week. Another caller wanted to know how to deal with all their children when the siren is sounded. "Which child am I supposed to prepare with the masks first?" she asked.

The trained mental health workers listen to the callers and allow them to express all their problems. "We don't intervene or offer advice until we know what exactly is the problem," said Fayege Hussein, the head of the administrative

board at the centre. "Last week a young woman called from the Hebron area saying that she has not seen her fiancé for weeks because of the curfew and wanted to know how he was. We could have stopped her at this point and told her to contact the Red Cross or the municipality who could have helped her get a message to her fiancé. But when we let her talk some more we discovered that she was having other problems at home and the issue of her fiancé was only a cover."

The "Call and be Comforted" service began with a front page announcement in Al Quds daily. Only a phone number was listed and people were a little suspicious about who was behind the project. When it was taken over by the

Palestinian Counselling Centre it became easier for the local community to deal with since the centre, which was founded in 1983, was known and was accessible. More importantly, the organisers of the project rejected ideas by Israel Radio and Israeli newspapers to give them interviews or to use Israel Radio to announce some of the calls. "We were willing to deal with Palestinian institutions but not with Israeli ones because we would have lost our credibility with the people," said Rana Nashashibi, a leading political figure in the occupied territories.

As people became convinced that the project was a legitimate and safe one, the centre started to receive calls that expressed political con-

cerns. One young caller asked what would happen if Saddam Hussein loses. "Will the Israelis carry out mass deportations against us? What will happen between us and the Syrians and the Egyptians?" Again the listeners tried to listen to the concerns, assure the caller that his fears are legitimate and then went on to explain that there are international treaties that deal with the situation of people like us who are under occupation. Another call revealed differences in one particular household. The mother called complaining that when the siren sounded her son and husband always fight. The son, who enthusiastically supports Iraq, refuses to wear his gas mask while the father, who is more

concerned about safety and less supportive of Iraq, tries to force his son to put on his protective mask. Mental health workers who are involved in this project admit that they are unable to deal with all the problems on the phone and that anyway only a small percentage of the population knows about the project and then most Palestinians have no phones. The advisers in the local papers are only read in the Jerusalem area because of the curfews. Sponsors of the project are looking for ways to contact Arab and international electronic media in order to spread the word about the project. They are hoping, for example that Jordan Television and Radio would run some of their

announcements listing their phone number. They are also hoping that they could get Radio Monte Carlo to do the same. Rana Nashashibi also feels that more visual projects are necessary. "Our people don't read papers and pamphlets, we need to reach them by radio and TV." She said that the centre is considering raising some funds for small TV programmes that deal with situations of stress and how to cope with them. She hopes that such programmes could be run on TV and she said that in the future there might be plans to go to the various Palestinian communities with a video and a TV playing the tape in addition to giving a lecture about stress. One idea she has is how

a family with older children can deal with a prolonged curfew. For the time being, Palestinian health workers are content to answer the phones and deal with the problems of people who have access to phones. In addition to counselling they also have given advice to people on where to get food and medical services. On some occasions they have taken them to some of the committees and charitable organisations providing food and other needy items.

Daoud Kuttab is a freelance Palestinian journalist based in Jerusalem. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

Gorbachev

(Continued from page 1)

"Can't talk about that," he said after a 65-minute walk on the beach at Kennebunkport, where he was spending a long holiday weekend. "Need to get a little more information."

"I have nothing to say about the Soviet matter."

Mr. Bush said "a lot of interesting things are happening" but that he did not want to discuss them. He was to return to Washington later in the day.

Mr. Fitzwater gave no indication the United States expected a breakthrough to result from the talks.

He said the allied effort aimed at forcing Iraq out of Kuwait was on course and "we've been given no reason to change at this time."

Asked whether the timing of a ground war might be delayed to give time to consider the peace plan, Mr. Fitzwater told reporters: "I wouldn't make any assumptions."

He said the United States had given the Soviet Union no assurances that it would delay a ground attack.

Mr. Fitzwater said Soviet help in getting Iraq out of Kuwait was appreciated as long as it led to a massive withdrawal without conditions.

He said the United States expected Moscow to get in touch with U.S. officials about the peace plan rather than Washington contacting the Soviets.

Defence Department officials in Washington said U.S. troops would continue military operations in the Gulf despite the Gorbachev initiative.

A Defence Department official said U.S. and allied forces were poised for ground and amphibious assaults that would be "a tour de force of American capability unlike anything that anyone has seen before."

"The decision is in the political arena," he said. "We're ready to do whatever the president asks us to do."

Mr. Gorbachev has 24 to 36 hours to persuade Iraq to pull out of Kuwait, the Paris daily Le Monde quoted informed French sources as saying on Monday.

The newspaper quoted the sources as saying Mr. Gorbachev had earlier sought 10 days from

the U.S.-led coalition to secure a peaceful Iraqi withdrawal and avert a land war. Le Monde said: "Gorbachev

has 24 hours — 36 at the very most — to succeed in his mediation between Baghdad and Washington."

Aziz

(Continued from page 1)

Khomeini, was quoted by Tehran Radio as saying the United States sought to "devour the wealth" of the Gulf region.

"While Iraq has accepted U.N. Security Council Resolution 660 (calling for withdrawal from Kuwait) explicitly and without any qualms, America by making vain excuses and portraying it as conditional, continues to perpetrate acts of genocide..." he was quoted as saying.

Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, told a group of army personnel in Tehran that "the United States, Britain, France and some other countries have concentrated their forces in the region to secure their interests through a war with Iraq."

He added that "since they may want to safeguard their interests in some other form in the future, it is necessary for our armed forces to remain alert."

Al Thawra, newspaper of the

ruling Arab Baath Socialist Party, said: "There are high hopes and expectations in Moscow that the Iraqi-Soviet talks will be a decisive turning point between war and peace."

Military officials in Baghdad meanwhile said their troops were ready for victory on the battlefield.

Al Qadisiya, the Defence Ministry newspaper, said: "The army has prepared all necessary means and power to make the ground war a killing zone and a graveyard for all the invaders dispatched to the region."

As Mr. Aziz met with Mr. Gorbachev, Baghdad's leading newspaper said the Moscow talks had raised "high hopes" for peace.

The Iraqi media had no immediate details on the two-day trip to Moscow, nor on the Soviet peace proposal which Aziz was to bring back to Baghdad.

Fahd

(Continued from page 1)

Arabia and other Gulf states and Islamic countries should help them... until the aggressor withdraws his army from Kuwait and its government and people return to it," he said.

Sheikh Abdul Aziz is director-general of the departments of scientific research, Ifta' (religious ruling), Da'awa (call) and guidance.

Kabaa washed

The governor of Mecca, Prince Majed Ben Abdul Aziz, Monday washed the Kaaba, Islam's holiest shrine, in a traditional ritual preceding Ramadan, the month of fasting.

The ceremony is conducted on behalf of King Fahd, whose official title is custodian of Islam's holiest shrines at Mecca, senior Saudi officials and accredited Arab and Islamic ambassadors.

Prince Majed washed the floor and walls of the Kabaa with rose water and water from Zamzam, an ancient well. It was then sprinkled with incense.

The Kabaa is washed twice a year once before the fasting month of Ramadan and a second time prior to the annual haj, which falls 70 days after the fasting month.

Ramadan falls around the 17th of March this year, depending on the sighting of the crescent.

The second time the Kaaba is washed, it is dressed by its Kiswa or black cover woven with gold and silver threads.

In the old times the Kiswa was brought from Egypt and other countries, but Saudi Arabia has sent up modern factory in Mecca to produce the Kiswa. More than 240 employees, mostly Saudis, including weavers and technicians are working to finish it in time for the next ceremony.

U.S.-Soviet strategic talks on track

By Barry Schweid
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After setbacks, the U.S.-Soviet drive to wrap up a strategic reduction treaty is on track again. But a handful of tough verification problems continue to defy compromise — and are making it difficult to pin down a date for a rescheduled superpower summit in Moscow.

U.S. officials are breathing easier now that the recent talks in Washington with Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh prevented further unravelling of treaty issues near resolution only a few months ago.

But they are feeling the impact of the more assertive role the Soviet military is taking in the arms control negotiations, as well as in the troubled Baltic republics.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's key military adviser, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, was not in Washington for the three days of talks Bessmertnykh held with President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker. That meant a loss of the moderating influence he

had exercised on nuclear arms and other weapons issues in recent years.

Hardliners in the Soviet military are considered at least partly responsible for the Kremlin's recent backtracking on the kinds of bombers that would be restricted under the START treaty, and on rules to guard against cheating on the accord.

"We have seen a steady trend in the direction of the general staff being more assertive and pushing their positions in the negotiations," said a U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The trend began shortly before Eduard Shevardnadze resigned as foreign minister in December. He said then that conservatives were gaining the upper hand in the Soviet Union.

Shevardnadze's close ties to Gorbachev and his membership on the Politburo gave him more clout than Bessmertnykh may have in dealing with Bush and Baker. But even Shevardnadze could not close the gap on three nagging technical problems or prevent the slide on the backfire bomber.

The United States has insisted

for years that the bomber, which the Soviets call the Tupolev-22-M, meets the definition of a strategic weapon under the treaty. That would have meant counting all backfires — the U.S. Defence Department says there are 330 with about 30 more produced each year — against two treaty limits: 6,000 warheads and 1,600 delivery vehicles, overall.

However, the two sides agreed to adopt the principle established in the 1979 SALT treaty of imposing limits on the backfires, but in what is called "a politically binding declaration" outside the accord.

Last fall, a deal was struck to limit the Soviets to 500 backfire bombers. Last spring, the Soviets had agreed that the bombers could not be refuelled in mid-flight. Unless they are, most experts are convinced, the backfire could not make it to the United States.

But Soviet negotiators over the last few months, apparently at the urging of the Soviet military, questioned the terms of the tentative agreement, especially the 500-bomber limit.

They also tried to reopen the

package of anti-cheating measures that Baker and Shevardnadze had basically concluded in December during their talks in Houston.

These include monitoring the production of mobile missiles and rules for counting long-range Cruise missiles carried on bombers. The Soviets are limited to eight Cruise missiles on their bombers and the United States to 10 on theirs.

Bessmertnykh's and Baker's talks put the backfire and verification measures back on track, another U.S. official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Still, the official cautioned: "there's a whole package of issues that has to be worked on" before the treaty can be wrapped up.

The deadline had been Feb. 11. That was when Bush and Gorbachev were to begin their summit meeting in Moscow and crown it with a treaty signing.

Bush was so confident START would be ready he scheduled the trip last month even though several provisions were still up in the air. Even just finishing the text in its highly technical English and Russian

terms would take at least 10 days, officials said.

Chief Soviet negotiator Alexei Onukhov came from a Moscow with a team of experts. Talks were held all last week at the State Department with a U.S. delegation headed by Reginald Bartholomew, under secretary of state for international security. The deadlock was not broken.

On Tuesday, after Baker and Bush made no further headway on the chronic problems, the summit was postponed. Bush cited the absence of a START agreement and said it would be "inappropriate" to be away from Washington during the conflict in the Gulf.

Still, Baker said he hoped the treaty could be finished in February and Bessmertnykh also registered optimism at the windup of his talks with Baker Tuesday night.

To get there, however, Onukhov and Bartholomew must solve, in talks to resume in Geneva probably next week, other nagging problems.

Those problems concern monitoring, disclosure of missile test flight, information and Soviet inspection of U.S. B-2 Stealth.

No honeymoon for 1st government of United Germany

By Richard Murphy
Reuters

BONN — Any hopes Chancellor Helmut Kohl may have had of easing himself gently into his fourth term of office have been rudely shattered by the Gulf war and the economic collapse of former East Germany.

Kohl was sworn in on Jan. 17, just hours after the United States and its allies began bombing Iraq on their U.N.-backed mission to end Baghdad's occupation of Kuwait.

Barely four weeks later Germany, which is barred by its constitution from sending troops outside the NATO area, is viewed by some allies as an unreliable partner willing to put up cash towards the war effort but little else.

"Washington expected political leadership, not reimbursement of its expenses," Ronald D. Asmus

of the U.S. Rand Corporation wrote in the German weekly Die Zeit.

Kohl's assurances that formerly communist East Germany would quickly blossom economically after unification last October look increasingly hollow as firms collapse, millions lose their jobs and Western investors stay away.

The Christian Democratic (CDU) chancellor now admits that taxes will have to rise, in breach of his election promises.

Kohl, who shook off his old image as a bumbler and emerged as a skilful statesman during the rush to unity, has stood by while his conservative ministers squabbled with their liberal Free Democratic (FDP) coalition partners about foreign policy.

Old changes that he has a tendency to duck for cover and wait for crises to pass have resurfaced.

"With mountainous problems

in finance and foreign policy and chaos in the coalition, the captain can no longer stay below deck," the business daily Handelsblatt said. "The chancellor must get out of his bunk and take over the rudder himself."

Horst Teltschik, who resigned as Kohl's top foreign policy adviser in December, offered a simple explanation for the apparent loss of touch — weariness.

"After an extremely heavy year... plus innumerable elections, and in the middle of coalition negotiations, the government was simply exhausted," he said in an interview.

Diplomats say the reality of the Gulf war overtook Germany's plans to gradually grow into its new international role.

"They were not prepared for the new role," a European diplomat said. "They had planned a step-by-step development: first get united with East Germany,

then help Poland and the Soviet Union, then define their role as a big power."

Kohl has shown irritation with foreign critics who last year expressed fears about a resurgent Germany returning to its old militarist ways and now accuse Germany of cowardice.

"They said we never take off our jackboots. And now they say we won't put them on any more," he told Britain's Daily Mail newspaper. "What do you expect from us?"

Politicians of all parties are urging Kohl to visit Washington to try to repair the damage, which Germany's \$11-billion contribution to the war effort has not healed.

The government finds little reason for cheer in other areas of foreign policy.

It is keen to press ahead with economic and political union within the European Community,

but the EC's weak and uncoordinated response to the Gulf crisis has convinced many of Bonn's partners that the community is far from ready for this.

"Germany is committed to supporting Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and is alarmed by signs he is becoming authoritarian,"

Nearly 400,000 Soviet soldiers are still in Eastern Germany and the Soviet parliament has not yet ratified a six-nation German unification treaty.

At home, surging budget deficits and demands for cash from Eastern Germany forced Kohl to drop his insistence that unity could be financed without tax increases. His ministers are now quarrelling over how to raise the extra billions.

"Helmut Kohl will look back with nostalgia to 1990," Handelsblatt commented.

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

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Jordan Times
JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Lendl defeats Sampras to take U.S. pro indoor tennis title

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Three weeks shy of his 31st birthday, Ivan Lendl says he's a long way from being through with tennis.

"I think this is the first year of the second half of my career," the former top-ranked player said Sunday after beating U.S. Open champion Pete Sampras 5-7, 6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 in the \$1-million U.S. pro Indoor Tennis Championships.

Sampras said he expected to see Lendl around for some time. "I think he's capable of being no. 1 again, but who's to tell," Sampras said.

Lendl, now the world's third-ranked player, served 23 aces during the 3-hour, 20-minute match, the last three finishing Sampras in the ninth game of the fifth set.

"I'm starting to feel finally that I'm beginning to understand the game a little bit," Lendl said. Lendl has won every Grand Slam tournament but Wimbledon at least twice and holds 89 career singles titles, including two in this event. He won in 1986 when Tim Mayotte withdrew from the final. Sampras, 19, won his first pro

title last year in Philadelphia and went on to win at Manchester and the U.S. Open.

Sampras was on a pace early to repeat his triumph, taking a 4-1 lead in the second set after winning the first. Lendl, however, won the next five games.

"Obviously it's not a good situation, but you have to keep trying," Lendl said. "If you keep trying, some good things sometimes come out of it and that's what happened today."

Sampras praised Lendl's powerful ground strokes and consistency.

"I just think my game and my intensity kind of went up and down throughout the match, whereas he was kind of one speed the whole way and he was just too strong for me," Sampras said.

Lendl broke service in the fourth game of the final set to lead 3-1, getting the break when he made a strong cross-court return of service that Sampras couldn't handle and hit a backhand into the net.

Lendl served two aces to get 4-1 and an ace and two service winners gave him a 5-2 lead.

Sampras served his 14th ace in winning the eighth game. Lendl's last three aces closed out the match in the next game after Sampras hit a return long on the first point.

Sampras won the first set from 6-5 as Lendl's first serves deteriorated. With the score 30-30, Sampras made two sharp service returns, Lendl hitting the first into the net and sending the other wide on a cross-court passing shot.

Lendl fell behind 4-1 in the second set, but snapped back to win the next five games, breaking Sampras' service in the seventh and ninth games.

Lendl got the first break of the third set in the seventh game, then served a love game for 5-3 and won four straight points in the 10th game to take a 2-1 lead in sets.

In the fourth set, Sampras broke Lendl with a passing shot to go up 4-2 and then rallied from 0-30 for a 5-2 lead. Leading 5-3, Sampras served out the set, evening the match at 2-2.

Rick Leach and Jim Pugh defeated Udo Riglewsky and Michael Stich of Germany 6-4, 6-4 in the doubles final.



Ivan Lendl

Navratilova beats Garrison to win Chicago tournament

CHICAGO (AP) — Martina Navratilova has the answer if she ever gets into a slump.

"I never need a win. I'll create a tournament in Chicago," she said Sunday, after winning her 11th Virginia Slims of Chicago championship in 14 years, beating Zina Garrison 6-1, 6-2.

"I was nervous because I haven't played for a while and haven't won in a long time," said Navratilova. The 34-year-old top seed was playing in only her second tournament since double-knee surgery in November and the Sunday's victory was her first since beating Garrison in the final at Wimbledon last summer.

"I'm like a bad dream — I keep coming back," Navratilova said. Garrison, the fifth seed, thought she played well despite the lopsided loss.

"If I would have played anyone else today I would have won,"

said Garrison, who is 1-30 against Navratilova. "Some people play really well against you — and it's like that with Martina and I."

Garrison also thought she played better than she did in her 6-4, 6-1 loss to Navratilova at Wimbledon.

The \$70,000 first prize for her 153rd career singles title boosted Navratilova's lifetime tennis winnings to \$16.7 million. Garrison, the 1989 Chicago Slims champion, earned \$35,000.

Navratilova, 34, dominated the 58-minute match with a variety of shots that had Garrison running all over the court, sometimes going in the wrong direction.

In the first set, Navratilova broke Garrison in the opening game. Then Garrison forced the second game to deuce twice before Navratilova held service.

Serving close to the net when not playing and using drop and pas-

sing shots to her full advantage. Navratilova also scored service breaks in the fifth and seventh games.

In the final set, Garrison forced the first and third games to deuce before Navratilova held serve both times for a 2-1 lead. Garrison lost service in the fourth game, but she broke back in the next game, cutting the deficit to 3-2. Navratilova, however, broke Garrison's serve in the sixth game for a 4-2 lead.

Navratilova was forced to deuce in the seventh game before holding serve. Then a service break on a drop shot in the eighth game gave her the match.

The nine-time Wimbledon singles champion improved her record to 30-1 against Garrison, whose only win against Navratilova was in the quarterfinals of the 1988 U.S. Open. They had last met in the Wimbledon last year.

Chang hopes to regain top 10 form

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AP) — Michael Chang is hoping to use the \$750,000 Volvo Indoor Championship to quietly begin his move back into the world's top 10 tennis players.

The unassuming Chang made a big splash in the tennis world in 1989, moving to the no. 5 ranking as he matched shots with the likes of Boris Becker, Ivan Lendl and Andre Agassi.

Chang, currently ranked 16th in the world, won only at Toronto last year as a hip injury sidelined him for three months and the 19-year-old found it difficult to regain his top 10 form.

"I think basically it took me quite some time to let the hip heal," Chang said. "The doctor didn't put a cast on me. He said let nature take its course. It set me back a little bit."

"In this day and age where there are so many good players on the tour, a setback means you're not only failing to improve, but you are failing to maintain."

"I've had a taste of the top 10 and hopefully I know what it takes to get there, stay there and work on being no. 1 in the world," Chang said.

The tournament was set to start Monday and will conclude Sunday at the Racquet Club.

Chang is but one of the world's top tennis names who will have their sights set first on defending champion Michael Stich.

Sampdoria coach dismisses Juventus challenge

By Reuters

SAMPDORIA coach Vujadin Boskov dismissed Juventus as championship contenders after his side beat them 1-0 to go clear at the top of the Italian Soccer League at the weekend.

His opposite number, Gigi Maifredi, said Juventus, now three points behind Sampdoria, had dominated for most of the game only to lose a contested penalty by Gianluca Vialli.

But Boskov said: "Juventus played well for 20 minutes in which they flattered only to deceive."

"If we won and we are now three points ahead of them in the table, it means that we are better and that from now on we have only two championship rivals (Internazionale and AC Milan), and not three."

A defiant Maifredi said: "We lost... but I don't think you could say we deserved to lose."

"We seized the initiative for fully 70 of the 90 minutes and we were only beaten by a doubtful penalty."

Vialli's match-winning penalty also made a point to Italian national team manager Azzeglio Vicini who dropped him and team mate Roberto Mancini for last week's friendly against Belgium in favour of Juventus strikers Salvatore Schillaci and Pier Luigi Casiraghi.

The two Milan clubs are joint second, a point behind Sampdoria.

AC Milan produced one of their best performances for some time in their 3-1 home win against Lazio, with goals from Daniele Massaro and Dutch international Marco Van Basten and Ruud Gullit.

Coach Arrigo Sacchi said: "It's great to see the side play well like that."

"That's the sort of soccer people love to see and watching them I felt that I was seeing once again the side that has become world famous for its competitive, chasing game and fast attacking play."

Internazionale lost ground on Sampdoria in a 1-1 draw at Roma.

There was no weekend league

action in France because of next Wednesday's European Championship qualifying match with Spain, but there was no let-up to the turmoil surrounding champions Marseille.

Club captain Jean-Pierre Papin was linked with Juventus and the star striker said in a newspaper interview published Monday he could be interested in joining the Italian club.

Asked about a statement by Marseille President Bernard Tapie that Juventus had offered 50 million francs (\$10 million) for him, Papin told France Soir: "I know nothing about it. But if the Italians are really interested, I am certainly willing to discuss the matter."

Papin, leading goal scorer in France for the last three seasons and top of the standings again this year, will spearhead the French attack at the Parc Des Princes Wednesday.

There was no league action in Spain, the Netherlands or Germany at the weekend.

Meanwhile debt-ridden Tottenham Hotspur, desperately needing a lucrative Football Association (F.A.) Cup run, were drawn at home to second division Notts County in the

quarter-finals of the competition Sunday.

The match is the only clear cut fixture to emerge from a draw thrown into confusion by recent bad weather.

It is sure to delight the London club, who have debts of some £12 million (\$23.6 million) and need to earn money from cup success to avoid having to sell England stars Gary Lineker and Paul Gascoigne.

But County proved their ability Saturday when they knocked out first division Manchester City in the fifth round.

Second division leaders West Ham will entertain the eventual winners of the clash between Liverpool and Everton, who re-play Wednesday after a 0-0 draw Sunday.

Third division Cambridge, in the last eight for the second successive year, face the daunting prospect of a trip to Arsenal if the north London side can get past third division Shrewsbury.

Matters are even more complicated for cup holders Manchester United.

If they win at Norwich in the fifth round Monday they will be at home to Southampton, Newcastle or Nottingham Forest.

Burrell, Christie clash at U.K. indoor athletics meet

COSFORD, England (R) — Leroy Burrell and Linford Christie were involved in an ugly off-track confrontation Sunday after the American trounced Europe's top sprinter in a 60 metres event at an International Indoor Athletics meeting.

Burrell, the new world record-holder, showed astonishing arrogance midway through the race, turning to his right to glare at Britain's European 100 metres champion and Olympic silver medalist.

An infuriated Christie, who finished a well-beaten third be-

hind Burrell and another American, Mark Witherspoon, turned angrily on Burrell after the race and the pair had to be separated by the burly British promotions official, former police officer Andy Norman.

"He told me 'if you do what you did again I will hurt you and I will kill you,'" Burrell told reporters. "I told him 'then kill me now.'"

Christie, somewhat unconvincedly, dismissed the confrontation later as "just hype."

"This was just trivial stuff," he said.

Tension had been building between the pair during the week after Burrell dismissed Christie's claim that he would have beaten the American over the same distance in Stuttgart last Sunday if he had not mistaken the finish line.

Burrell's time of 6.56 seconds was the second fastest time in the world this year, behind only the world record 6.48 the American set in Madrid last Wednesday.

Just over an hour later Christie was handed a second defeat, this time over 200 metres by Michael Johnson, the world number one outdoors last year.

Johnson won convincingly in 20.74 seconds, although, on his own admission, it was not one of his best races.

The 23-year-old American did not make the best of starts and also had trouble on the final bend but he still had too much speed for Christie, who finished second in 21.15.

Christie, who was all smiles as he spoke to a television interviewer with Johnson afterwards, said he had no regrets at taking on two such formidable opponents only a month before the World Indoor Championships in Seville, Spain.

Carbajal knocks out Santos

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Michael Carbajal, showing punching power rarely seen at 108 pounds (49 kilograms), stopped challenger Macario Santos with a devastating left hook in the second round to retain his International Boxing Federation (IBF) junior flyweight title.

It was the sixth straight knock-out for the 1988 Olympic silver medalist, who won for the 19th time in as many pro fights.

"I knew it would only be a matter of time," Carbajal said. "I was setting him up with my jab, trying to hit him with a clean shot."

The left hook, which followed a pair of nice rights, landed flush on the face of the challenger, who crumpled to the canvas. Santos stayed on his back as referee Richard Steele counted him out at 1:09 of the second round.

Forget wins Belgian indoor title

BRUSSELS (Agencies) — After spending years in the shadows of more famous Frenchmen, Guy Forget's biggest tournament win yet was overshadowed by the fight about the world rankings.

Forget defeated Andrei Cherkasov of the Soviet Union 6-3, 7-5, 3-6, 7-6 (7-5) Sunday to capture the Donnay Indoor Championship, but found tennis fans still talking about Boris Becker's injury that boosted Stefan Edberg back into the No. 1 spot in the world rankings.

Fortunately, Forget does not seek the limelight.

"Fame is not my goal," he said, relaxed as ever after his second tournament title this year propelled him into the top 10 on the ATP Tour computer.

Relying on a lightning serve, accurate drives and crisp volleys, Forget won the New South Wales open in Sydney, Australia, last month. He used the same quality to capture this \$600,000 event Sunday, beating Edberg in the semifinals on his way to the crown.

Although his play can be just as spectacular as that of Yannick Noah and Henri Leconte, the French have not yet taken to Forget in the same way.

"Let me continue playing like I have since January and they'll get to know me better in France," the 26-year-old left-hander said.

He acknowledged the lack of Grand Slam performances was something to do with it.

Noah's win in the 1983 French Open in Paris gave him instant fame, and his off-court antics and on-court acrobatics turned him into a well-loved personality even after his skills started to wither.

Leconte made the final of the 1988 edition of the French Open and he still has a love-hate relationship with the French public, mainly because of his hot temper and unpredictable form.

Considering his sterling streak at regular ATP Tour events, Forget said "now I have to do this at a Grand Slam" to emulate Noah and Leconte. "It is possible. It is not a dream."

Forget has never reached a Grand Slam quarterfinal in nine years of trying. Leconte and Noah both sprang on to the scene as confident teenagers, while Forget has slowly nurtured his talents.

"Some players mature early," he said. "At 23, I was not an athlete yet."

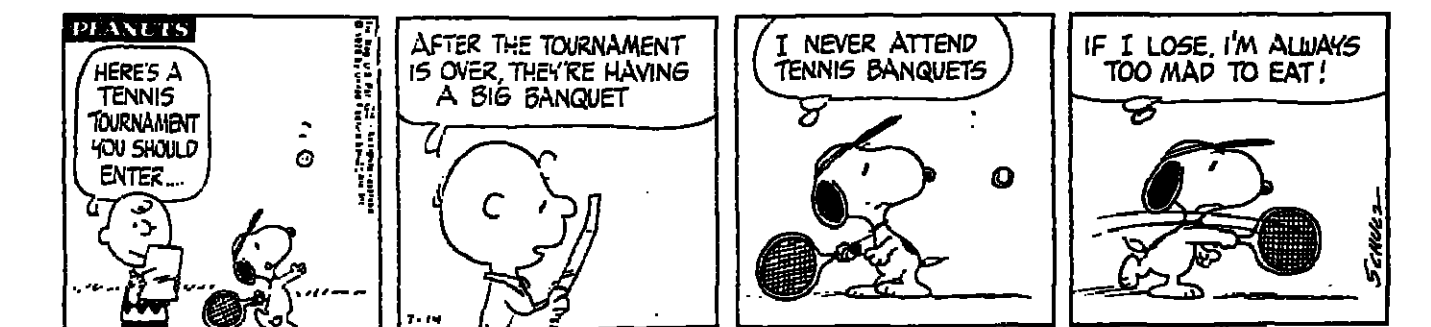
There's also been persistent questions about his mental toughness, but he has disproved critics over the last year by winning. And, he says, his best years are still ahead of him.

Forget, who had won his only previous match with Cherkasov,

Mutt'n'Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMAR HIRSCH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ A Q 9 6 4 3 ♣ V 9 6 2 ♠ A K 8 3
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
3 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?

Q.2—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ A 10 7 6 3 2 ♠ A 10 9 4 3 8 ♠ A 5
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
3 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass
3 NT Pass ?
What action do you take?

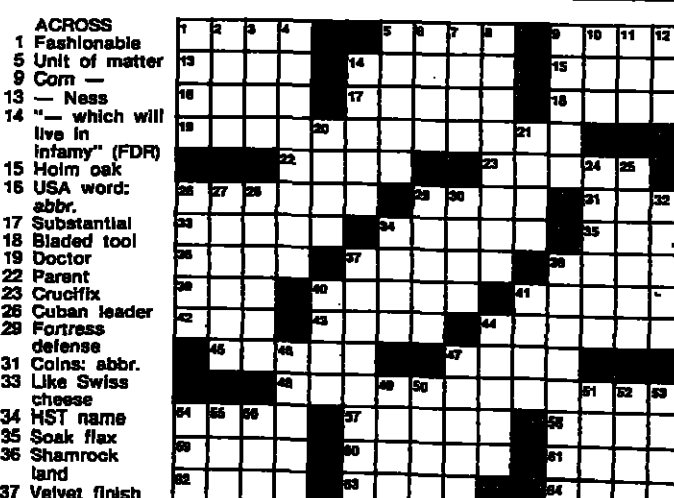
Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ K J 9 7 6 2 ♠ A J 5 2 ♠ J 6 ♠ 7
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
3 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?

Q.4—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ A K 10 9 7 3 ♠ A K J 1 0 8 3 ♠ 7 5
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one heart. What action do you take?

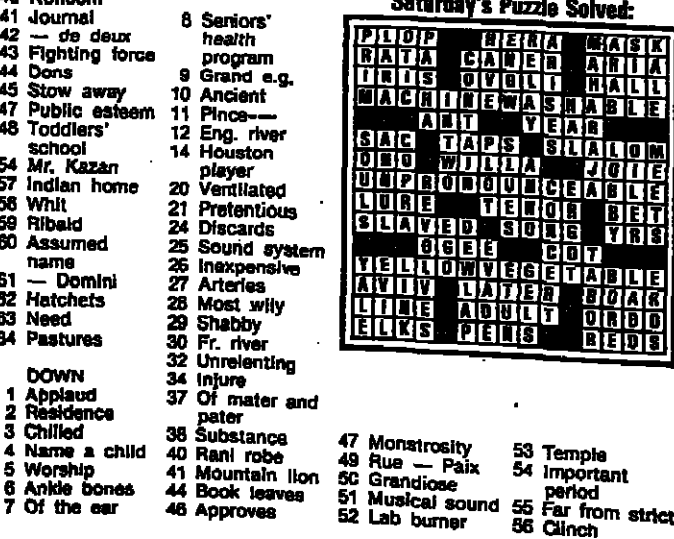
Q.5—Both vulnerable, South deals:
♠ J 10 7 6 7 ♠ K Q 10 9 4 ♠ 6 ♠ A K 8
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
?
What do you bid now?

Q.6—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ 6 5 ♠ 9 8 4 ♠ 5 4 ♠ A K J 10 5 2
Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?

THE Daily Crossword



Saturday's Puzzle Solved:



Experts say U.S. will remain hooked on oil from Gulf over next ten years

WASHINGTON (AP) — The notion of an America independent of Gulf oil is as much an illusion as it was two decades ago when the government first embraced the idea, experts say. This is the virtually unanimous conclusion of government, business and academic experts who met at a U.S. reliance on Middle East oil will continue unabated and may even increase. That consensus, which emerged from a State Department oil seminar last week, is welcome news at this juncture, given the uncertainties about the political makeup of the Gulf once the U.S.-led war against Iraq ends.

The panel agreed that no combination of conservation measures or alternate sources of oil will be enough to make even a

minor dent in the American addiction — or that of other industrialised countries — to Gulf oil supplies.

William Ramsay, a top State Department oil expert, said, "whether we like it or not and despite the efficiency gains of the past decade, the world economy still runs on oil and as we look ahead, the trend seems inexorable."

"The global oil import reliance will continue to grow throughout the 90's and major increases in consumption will certainly be supplied by the Gulf, he noted."

The incentives for reducing U.S. dependence on Gulf oil would appear to be immense. Oil imports from that region drain billions from U.S. coffers, and the potential instability of the

region, underscored by the Gulf war, has raised serious doubts about its reliability as a supply source.

Almost two decades ago, president Richard Nixon established energy independence as national policy, emphasising conservation. But the panelists pointed out that most of the easy conservation measures — such as improved home insulation and more energy efficient automobiles — already are in place. There are no conservation panaceas on the horizon nowadays, they said.

Lucio Noto, a Mobil Corp. vice president, said there is no reason to believe there will be any significant production increases by oil countries outside the Middle East over the next decade.

He also noted that U.S. production levels are down over the

past decade by more than 25 per cent to 7.2 million barrels a day and "the prospects that this number will go down are very strong."

Noto pointed out that the situation of other industrialised is even more precarious than that of the United States. Whereas the U.S. imports 40 to 50 per cent of its oil consumption, the figure for Europe is 66 per cent and for Japan 100 per cent.

Paul Jabbar, a vice president of Banker's Trust, believes U.S. dependency on Gulf oil will increase. To ensure continued access at reasonable prices, he said, the Gulf region must not "fall under the sway of a regional hegemonic power" or an outside force hostile to the industrialised world.

Soviet government plans to raise prices by 60%

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov said Monday his government planned to raise prices 60 per cent on average but higher wages and welfare payments would compensate people for most of the increase.

In a report to parliament, Pavlov said the state would set price ceilings on necessities, including meat, milk, sugar and transport, following individual republics to set lower levels.

Huge state subsidies would be slashed, though not yet eliminated, as a key step towards a pricing system reflecting the costs of producing and distribution more accurately.

Almost one-third of all goods would be sold at free or so-called "agreed" prices set by suppliers and retailers.

Medicine, petrol, energy and vodka would remain at current prices.

"We view this reform as a necessary stage in the transition

to market relations," Pavlov told the Supreme Soviet. More prices would be freed over time, he said.

But his one-hour speech — largely a series of figures read in a monotone — ignored opposition demands for an outline of government strategy to reform the moribund economy.

The parliament is due to discuss Pavlov's report Tuesday before turning its attention to President Mikhail Gorbachev's Gulf war peace initiative, which he presented to Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz Monday.

"The level of retail prices will grow by an average of 60 per cent," Pavlov, appointed prime minister last month, told the first day of the parliament's new session.

"We think that for a number of goods which determine the population's living standards the state must set the top level of prices and control their growth," he said.

Inflation in Britain eases

LONDON (AP) — Britain's annual inflation rate fell to nine per cent in January from 9.3 per cent in the previous month, helped by retailers' sale promotions and cheaper fuel prices, the government has said.

The retail index rose 0.2 per cent in January from December, the Central Statistical Office said.

The index stood at 130.2 in January, 129.9 in December and 119.5 in January 1990. The index uses a January 1987 base of 100. The underlying inflation rate, which excludes mortgage payments and a per capita tax, fell to 7.1 per cent in January from 7.7 per cent in December.

Prices for clothing and household goods fell during January as a result of widespread retailers' sales, the office said. Gasoline and automobile prices also declined on the month, it said.

However, there were increases in prices for food and alcoholic drinks, housing costs and higher rail fares, it said.

S. Arabia confirms borrowing

RIYADH (AP) — Finance Minister Mohammad Abal Khail confirmed Monday that the kingdom is borrowing from abroad for the first time in more than 30 years.

Abal Khail told the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) that international banks made an excellent response to the borrowing request "due to their knowledge of the strength of the Saudi financial position and ... its natural resources and strong financial assets."

The Associated Press and other news organisations reported last week that Saudi Arabia has approached a group of banks to borrow some more than \$3 billion to help finance a budget deficit that has been swollen by the war against Iraq.

The loan is being organised by Morgan Guaranty Ltd.

The kingdom has committed an estimated \$48 billion to finance the war, said diplomatic sources. Oil revenues in 1991 are unlikely to total more than \$44 billion, calculated on an average \$20 per barrel for current output of about eight million barrels per day.

Abal Khail did not provide any details of the borrowing. But he said it was incorrect to suggest the borrowing reflected any weakness in Saudi Arabia's financial position.

Borrowing is controversial in Saudi Arabia because interest payments are forbidden in strict Islamic law.

Abal Khail told SPA that borrowing is normal for countries or organisations that face pressing financial needs.

The last time the kingdom had to borrow was when King Saud depleted the treasury before being deposed in 1964.

Qatar reviews banking policies

BAHRAIN (R) — The Qatari Monetary Agency (QMA) said it would review its banking policies to maintain stability among banks and the banking system in the country.

The Bahrain-based Gulf News Agency Monday quoted QMA chief Abdullah Khalid Al Attiya as telling the Qatari daily Al Sharq that the QMA "is working to introduce new policies aimed at maintaining the stability among banks and the banking system in Qatar."

He said the regulations review would include financial investment, loans and deposits sectors and other credit facilities.

Qatar is among the Gulf Arab states hit by the Gulf crisis caused by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait last August.

Attiya said the banking situation in Qatar was good and all banks had enough liquidity. Liquidity was "far higher than it was before the current Gulf crisis," he said.

"Banks' performances in 1990 are good. The banks, especially local banks, were able to achieve excellent profits despite the fall in deposits' amounts," Attiya said without elaborating.

Army curfew worsens living for Palestinians

Gulf war cuts deeply into Israeli economy

TEL AVEV (AP) — After a month of war in the Gulf — and accompanying Israeli army security strictures on Palestinians — the intertwined economies of Israel and the occupied territories are in deep trouble.

Israel is experiencing the worst drop in tourism in 17 years, a sharp decline in consumer spending and a slowdown in factory production.

As for Palestinians, most are being kept from their jobs in Israel and the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip by army order. This has both devastated the Palestinian economy and badly hurt Israeli business that depend on Arab labour.

Danny Gilerman, president of the Israeli Chambers of Commerce, described Israel's \$50 billion economy as "shell-shocked."

"If some real drastic measures aren't taken immediately to reinvigorate the economy, we shall see the collapse of many businesses," Gilerman warned on national radio.

On the other side of the line, a month-long army curfew has reduced Palestinian commerce and industry to a crawl. Money that used to come from relatives in the Gulf has dried up.

Palestinian development expert Samir Hulaileh says the war already has cost the \$2 billion Arab economy at least \$200 million in lost income and production.

"We have a disaster in the making," Hulaileh said. "There could be long-term damage."

The 1.7 million residents of the occupied territories were viewed by Israel as a vast, cheap labour pool and a market for Israeli

products. The three-year Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation has more than halved that market with boycotts of Israeli-made goods. But it has done little to sever the labour linkage because there are few job alternatives in the territories.

Some 110,000 Palestinians worked in Israel before the war, and their earnings constituted one-fifth of the West Bank's total income and two-fifths of Gaza's. The crunch has come because of the army curfew, imposed Jan. 17 for fear that pro-Israeli Palestinians would disrupt Israeli security at a time it was threatened with Iraqi missiles.

Under an army scheme introduced last week, several thousand Palestinians were given special 10-day work permits and allowed to return to jobs in Israel. But the majority of Arab workers won't be allowed back, creating havoc for Israeli employers.

In the construction industry, where more than half of the work force generally has been Palestinian, building activity has fallen to one-quarter of prewar levels, the Israeli housing ministry says. Agriculture, where Palestinians make up most of the seasonal labour, has been hit hard. Israeli growers say that if their oranges and grapefruits are not picked within the next two or three weeks, they will lose most of the crop.

The difficulty in getting Palestinian workers into Israel comes on top of direct war damage to both economies.

In Israel, tourism arrivals have fallen to the lowest level since the 1973 Middle East war, and con-

sumer spending for clothes, shoes and furniture is off by more than half.

Economist Yaacov Sheinin estimates the Gulf war already has cost the Jewish state \$1 billion in lost production, lower tourism revenues, higher defence spending and direct damage from Iraqi missile hits.

Sheinin expects the United States and other Western allies to compensate Israel for much of the loss and predicts the nation still may achieve its projected seven per cent economic growth this year.

Until that foreign aid arrives, the finance minister has announced a 500-million-shekel (\$250 million) loan fund to carry financially strapped Israeli companies through the crisis.

In Palestinian areas, only 30 of the territories' 3,000 factories have army permits to operate, and even those are not working at capacity.

Hashem Juneidi, owner of the West Bank's largest dairy, said he has been allowed to recall only 26 of his 40 workers and his production of cheese and yoghurt has been halted.

"People have no money to buy our products," Juneidi said.

Bethlehem, the Israeli information centre for human rights in the occupied territories, reports that farmers have been unable to get their vegetables to market because of army road blocks and that the Israelis have stalled Arab export programmes, including the delivery of 5,000 tonnes of olive oil to Italy.

Cash shortages are so severe that "continuation of this inactivity" in people unable to purchase the most basic necessities," Bethlehem said.

OPEC may use March meeting as emergency session—Subroto

NICOSIA (R) — OPEC might turn a consultative meeting next month into an extraordinary session that could take decisions to defend falling oil prices, OPEC Secretary-General Subroto was quoted as saying Monday.

OPEC oil ministers are due to meet in Vienna on March 11 for their first conference since the Gulf war began on Jan. 17 amid fears oil prices would tumble to below \$10 a barrel once the fighting stopped.

Subroto told the Libyan news agency IANA that the 13-member Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was concerned oil prices could deteriorate further during the second quarter of this year because the market was awash with surplus crude.

"The essential issue that is of concern to the organisation at present is the deterioration of oil prices because of war in the Gulf," IANA, received in Cyprus, quoted Subroto as saying.

"The world oil market is suffering from an excess in supplies and this could make matters worse during the second quarter of this year which is traditionally characterised by lower consumption levels," he added.

Subroto, an Indonesian, was speaking after meeting Libyan Oil Minister Abdullah Saleh Al Badri Sunday.

OPEC oil ministers might turn their consultative session in Vienna into an extraordinary meeting "to agree on necessary measures to rectify the prevailing conditions, create a balance between supply and demand and restore stability to oil prices," Subroto was quoted as saying.

The group has set a "minimum reference" price of \$21 a barrel. World oil prices have tumbled by more than 50 per cent this year compared with levels seen at the start of the Gulf crisis when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August. Both Iraq and Kuwait are members of OPEC.

Middle East crudes are selling at around \$13 a barrel compared with more than \$30 at the start of the conflict when the United Nations Security Council imposed a ban on exports from Iraq and Kuwait.

Since then Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, and other OPEC members had opened their taps to compensate for the loss of more than four million barrels per day of Iraqi and Kuwaiti output.

Gulf-based oil industry sources have said prices could drop further unless over-producers lowered their output.

The group is presently producing nearly 23 million barrels a

day, according to a recent Renter survey.

Gulf Arab OPEC delegates said Monday that OPEC is unlikely to reintroduce oil output quotas suspended after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait last August unless the Gulf war is over when oil ministers meet in Vienna next month.

Even if oil-producing states involved in the conflict suffer a further drop in world prices, they are unlikely to review their policies at the Vienna meeting.

"There are five OPEC members involved in the war. It is a bigger thing for them than \$1 or \$2 off the oil price," said one delegate. "I doubt if we are going to get an agreement while the war is going on."

Members of OPEC agreed last August to suspend their quota system to make up the shortfall caused by a U.N. embargo on Iraq and Kuwait.

Any OPEC action hangs on Saudi Arabia, which produces more than one-third of the organisation's total oil output and whose current production is way above the quotas set for last July.

But delegates saw little likelihood of change in Saudi policy despite the strains of financing the war and the possibility of oil prices weakening further.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Monday, February 18, 1991

Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell		Buy	Sell
U.S. dollar	664.0	668.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	510.6	513.7
Pound Sterling	1308.6	1316.5	Dutch guilder	399.5	401.9
Deutsche mark	450.0	452.7	Swedish crown	130.2	130.9
Swiss franc	525.0	528.2	Italian lira (for 100)	59.8	60.2
French franc	132.1	132.9	Belgian franc (for 10)	218.5	219.8

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.

One Sterling	1.9635/45	U.S. dollar	
One U.S. dollar	1.1520/30	Canadian dollar	
	1.4810/17	Deutsche mark	
	1.6650/60	Dutch guilder	
	1.2690/97	Swiss franc	
	30.42/47	Belgian franc	
	5.0350/00	French franc	
	1108/1109	Italian lire	
	13.05/15	Japanese yen	
	5.3550/5400	Swedish crowns	
	5.7850/7900	Norwegian crowns	
	5.6875/25	Danish crowns	
One ounce of gold	364.60/365.10	U.S. dollars	

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — The All Ordinaries index soared briefly above the 1,400 level for the first time in more than four months as cashed-up investors scrambled to join the sharp rally on world bourses. The index ended up 22.7 points at 1,339.3.

TOKYO — Hopes for an early end to the Gulf war pushed the Nikkei stock average up nearly 900 points to close above the 26,000 level for the first time since Aug. 21. The Nikkei rose 886.27 points, or 3.50 per cent, to 26,330.01.

HONG KONG — The Hang Seng ended sharply higher with a 60.76 point, or 1.76 per cent, gain, rising to 3,473.42 on a rally in Tokyo.

BOMBAY — The stock exchange was closed to enable brokers to complete business done in the three weeks ending last Friday, when the BSE index rose 15.37 points to 1,039.60.

FRANKFURT — Shares continued to rally on hopes of a quick end to the Gulf war. The Dax index closed at 1,572.57, up 41.38 or 2.70 per cent.

PARIS — The market paused for breath after prices soared in mid-session. But the CAC40 index still ended 24.57 higher at 1,694.96.

ZURICH — Prices closed higher on active buying, buoyed by Tokyo's strong showing. Dealers said Blue Chips were still in demand. The all-share SPI index closed at 1,010, up 13.5 and its highest since last September.

LONDON — Shares closed firmer after holding morning gains through a dull afternoon session. The FTSE index closed up 21.4 at 2,318.3.

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Soviet forces seize Georgian militia base in night attack

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet forces backed by tanks and armoured vehicles shot their way into an unofficial Georgian militia base and captured it in the early hours of Monday, local journalists and politicians said.

It was the first known instance of Soviet military intervention against Mkhedroni (horsemen), a well-armed vigilante group formed two years ago on a growing wave of nationalist sentiment in the southern republic.

"There was shooting and they captured the base. Three (Mkhedroni) people were wounded and the military took them away, it's not known where," said one journalist in the Georgian capital Tbilisi.

The attackers, wearing masks, stormed the base near Tbilisi in three tanks and 10 armoured vehicles, he added.

"There was fighting and there are wounded. The nationalists had three machineguns seized. Nobody is being allowed in and tanks have blocked the road," said Valerian Advadze, a Georgian member of the Supreme

Soviet or parliament.

The Mkhedroni is one of a number of unofficial militia groups which have sprung up in southern Soviet republics in open defiance of President Mikhail Gorbachev. It describes itself as a troubleshooting force dedicated to keeping the peace.

Its leader Djaba Ioseliani said in a recent interview that he could raise 6,000 men within eight hours.

But Georgia's nationalist leaders oppose the Mkhedroni, calling it a destabilising group armed by the Kremlin in order to sow trouble.

The journalists said 30 Mkhedroni militiamen were in the base at the time of the raid. One of them said all 30 were arrested. They added that two members of the Soviet forces were wounded, one seriously.

Georgians have voiced fears in recent weeks that their nationalist challenge to the Kremlin could be met with armed Soviet intervention as in the Baltic republic of Lithuania and Latvia last month. Zviad Gamsakhurdia, pres-

ident of Georgia, said he expects the Soviet army to crush the Soviet republic's drive for independence and called for Western aid.

"Of course I fear an attack and I am sure it will come. For the moment we are not strong enough to repel any aggression," he told El Mundo newspaper in an interview published Monday. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has condemned a move by Gamsakhurdia to form a 12,000 man National Guard.

The Georgian leaders said only respect for international law and world public opinion, or an international agreement similar to that which led to the Soviet forces abandoning Eastern European countries, could make the Soviet army leave Georgia.

"Without political and economic aid from the West it will be difficult to win independence. But right now the countries that could help us are scared of Gorbachev. They don't want to spoil relations with him," he said.

Gamsakhurdia's aspirations have brought Georgia into direct

confrontation with Moscow. Tension has been worsened by clashes with the Ossetians, an ethnic minority which wants to stay part of the Soviet Union and which is encouraged by Moscow.

More than 30 people have been killed in fighting between Ossetians and Georgian extremists and police during the dispute. Authorities in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi have mounted a blockade of Tskhinvali, home to 35,000 Ossetians.

Gamsakhurdia said Moscow was using the Ossetians to try to blunt Georgia's separatist aspirations.

"They are using the Ossetians to do the Red Army's dirty work, and are bringing about a civil war," he said.

"They are using bands of Ossetian terrorists, in the name of the Ossetian people, to give the impression that they are all against us."

Gamsakhurdia said in Tbilisi alone 6,000 Georgians had sought refuge after being forced to flee from Southern Ossetia after their homes were burnt down.

Thai road blast death toll rises to 171

BANGKOK (R) — The death toll from Thailand's worst road disaster rose to 171 Monday and newspapers suggested the victims had themselves to blame.

"In the past 24 hours we have found about 40 bodies — in houses, in trees," a police officer in southern Phang-Nga province told Reuters by telephone.

The tragedy occurred Friday afternoon in the village of Thung Maproa, when hundreds of people crowded around a truck and trailer which had flipped over at a sharp curve with a load of detonators and dynamite.

Police are still trying to establish what caused the massive explosion about an hour later which ripped through the onlookers and backed-up traffic and razed dozens of houses.

Witnesses and police officers have said they believe a dropped cigarette from the crowd sparked the blast.

Other reports said people who had picked up detonators threw them in the truck when urged by a police officer to hand them back.

The Nation newspaper said police had tried to hold back the curious onlookers.

"It was the villagers and passers-by who ignored the police warning and tried to get a closer look at the overturned truck and its cargo," it said in an editorial.

"Lately there seems to be a dangerous pattern of docile villagers turning into merciless looters, stealing cargoes from overturned trucks, stripping valuables from injured victims and looting dead bodies in road accidents," it said.

Police were also probing how the truck crashed in the first place. The driver has disappeared — he has either run away or been blown up.

The Nation raised the point that long-haul drivers routinely used amphetamines to keep awake.

The government faces questions on whether it is enforcing strict enough safety regulations on dangerous and heavy loads.

Friday's tragedy followed a horrific disaster at a busy Bangkok intersection last September, when about 80 people perished in a fireball after a liquid gas tanker crashed.

Only 10 days ago 13 people were killed when a truck ploughed into a roadside cafe in northeast Thailand.

"Old problem, new victims," said the headline of a Bangkok Post editorial.

It noted that Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan had pledged a cabinet debate on safety regulations Tuesday but said: "To expect anything concrete out of these knee-jerk reactions is perhaps unrealistic."

"How many more innocent lives must be sacrificed before concrete and positive action — rather than empty promises — is taken by the government to prevent recurrence of these avoidable national tragedies?"

The new toll was revised from 123 Sunday after more bodies were found and villagers reported the deaths of relatives. So far no foreigners have been listed as victims.

Many of the dead were too badly charred or dismembered to be identified. The search was continuing but police said they did not expect to find many more recognisable bodies.

Thirty-five homes were completely demolished and 120 damaged, according to the official count.

Two more arrested in El Salvador massacre

SAN SALVADOR (AP) — Authorities said Sunday they have arrested two women who took part in the massacre last month of 15 peasants.

They said the suspects, Natividad and Maria Cristina Vasquez, implicated three men whose military status is still in dispute and a civilian.

"With these two, I think the case is now much clearer," Judge Miguel Jose Valdez told reporters after questioning the women. "They admit to having participated."

Natividad Vasquez told reporters the killers forced her and Maria Cristina to point out the homes of each of the 15 victims in the village of El Zapote. The two women live in nearby Ayutuxtepeque, about 10 kilometres from the capital, and knew the victims.

Authorities have said they believe the massacre stemmed from a personal dispute and has no political overtones. The victims were all members of the same family. The human rights office of the Roman Catholic Church has said the killers were active-duty soldiers, which could imply they were part of a military death squad.

The 12-year-old civil war between the rebel Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front and a succession of U.S.-backed governments has killed at least 72,000 people, most of them civilians.

The government insists that one of the suspects, Jesus Vane-gas, deserted 24 hours before the slayings and took his rifle with him. It has said two other suspects, Armando and Rafael De Paz, were discharged a year ago.

Zhivkov accuses aides for Bulgaria's economic decline

SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP) — For the first time since his ouster in 1989, former Communist strongman Todor Zhivkov has blamed members of his government for Bulgaria's economic decline and \$11-billion foreign debt.

In an interview with the weekly Fogel, Zhivkov singled out one-time premier Georgi Atanasov and Andrei Lukanov, who was his foreign trade minister and replaced Atanasov as premier in February 1990.

Zhivkov was scheduled to go on trial on Feb. 25. He is charged with embezzlement, but earlier charges of abuse of office and fomenting national hatred were dropped.

He is widely held responsible for Bulgaria's deep economic crisis and for damaging its international prestige.

According to an advance copy of Fogel made available Sunday to the Associated Press, Zhivkov assailed in particular Lukanov, who stepped down as premier under public pressure last November.

Zhivkov reportedly rejected published reports that Lukanov, then Foreign Minister Petar Mladenov and former Defence Minister Dobri Dzhuruv prepared to topple him on Nov. 10, 1989, because they felt threatened by him.

According to Fogel, Zhivkov said he had planned to step down earlier that year for health reasons but did not find a worthy successor among members of the Communist Party's politburo.

He said he told Soviet ambassador Viktor Sharapov that his choice fell on Alexander Lilov, a former chief ideologist Zhivkov had fired in the 1970s. But the Soviets wanted Mladenov instead.

Lilov is now chairman of the Socialist Party, the renamed Communist Party. Zhivkov denied he had had a conflict with Lukanov and Mladenov, insisting that "all accusations that I had been preparing a blow against the plotters are attempts to manipulate public opinion."

Zhivkov, who ruled Bulgaria for almost 35 years, also claimed that the three "plotters" and Stanko Todorov, then parliament chairman, were behind efforts to stage "a spectacular trial against me."

He said one reason for the failure of his programme for economic development outlined in July 1987 was "jealousy and resistance" from a lot of "our allies and partners." Fogel reported: "We were openly abused that ... we were heading toward restoration of capitalism," he was quoted as saying.

2 killed in cargo plane crash at Cleveland airport

CLEVELAND (AP) — Witnesses said they saw an explosion shortly before a cargo jet carrying mail crashed, killing the two crewmen aboard.

The DC-9 flipped upside-down onto the snow-covered main runway at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport early Sunday, demolishing the cockpit containing Capt. David Reay and First Officer Richard Duney.

Witnesses to the crash included passengers aboard a Continental Airlines flight from Denver that had landed and was taxiing as the cargo jet was preparing to take off.

"It looked like it exploded right in the middle," said passenger Darren J. Wheeler. "It looked like it flipped, and then it slid right by us upside down on the runway. It was 200 feet (61 metres) from us, at the most."

He said the Continental pilot calmed passengers by saying the accident apparently involved a cargo plane, not a commercial flight with passengers.

Another Continental passenger, Jeff Glidden, recalled that the pilot said, "let's say a short prayer for the crew."

Officials refused to speculate on the cause of the crash or whether the cargo, U.S. Mail, might have contained an explosive.

Airport spokesman Mark Courtney, when asked whether a bomb might have been planted in the plane's cargo, said: "We have no reason to believe that is a possibility."

Mort Edelman, a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) spokesman in Chicago, said there were flames in the jet's left engine as it tried to take off.

Investigators for the FAA and National Transportation Safety Board arrived Sunday to sift through the wreckage, seeking the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder as well as other clues. The overturned fuselage had a charred, gaping hole, and the wings were sheared off.

Inter-Korean meeting in doubt

SEOUL (R) — North Korea accused South Korea Monday of preparing for war on the Korean peninsula and said it would be impossible to hold a fourth meeting between their prime ministers in such a "terror-ridden atmosphere."

South Korean officials said the unexpectedly harsh North Korean statement appeared to doom the meeting scheduled in Pyongyang next week. "North Korea had as yet not received any official notice cancelling the talks,"

"We cannot exactly figure out what was the intention of North Korea," said a spokesman for Seoul's South-North Dialogue Office said.

The officials also said Pyongyang had not yet replied to a request last week by Seoul for a liaison officers' meeting to settle details of the prime ministers' scheduled meeting.

While Pyongyang's intentions

may have been unclear, its reversion to cold war rhetoric was clearly damaging to the growing inter-Korean dialogue which began last September when both prime ministers met in Seoul.

Since the first meeting, the highest-level inter-Korean dialogue since the peninsula was divided in 1945, the premiers have held two other meetings, although without substantive agreement.

Last week, both sides agreed for the first time to field unified teams under one flag for two sports events scheduled for this year. It was unclear if that agreement would be affected by Monday's statement.

The Pyongyang statement, carried on the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) and monitored in Tokyo, cited the beginning of the annual U.S.-South Korean "Team Spirit" military exercises as well as increased military readiness due to

the Gulf crisis.

KCNA said "South Korea is engulfed in an unprecedented terror-ridden atmosphere. North-South relations are going back to the original point of acute confrontation before dialogue started and a very tense situation in which a war could break out any moment is being created again on the Korean peninsula."

"It is the South Korean authorities avoiding dialogue and kicking up a racket of confrontation that are wholly to blame for the impossibility of the fourth inter-Korean high-level talks slated for Feb. 23," KCNA said.

Seoul's Unification Ministry said in a statement that North Korea "unilaterally announced that the fourth round of South-North high-level talks would not be held as scheduled."

The ministry said Pyongyang's action showed it was using the talks to further its goal of bringing communism to the South.

S. Korean president reshuffles cabinet

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo reshuffled his cabinet Monday to bolster the nation's sagging economy and calm public anger over a multi-million dollar housing scandal.

A presidential spokesman said Roh replaced Deputy Prime Minister Lee Seung-Yun, who heads the Economic Planning Board, with Choi Kak-Kyu, a former agriculture minister and a senior member of the ruling Democratic Liberal Party (DLP).

Roh fired Construction Minister Lee Sang-Hee and Seoul Mayor Park Sen-Jik, a central government appointee, over charges of bribery and high-level influence-peddling in a scandal which has involved a number of politicians and a presidential aide.

Sacked Deputy Prime Minister Lee and his economic team have been criticised for failing to cope with soaring inflation and waning export competitiveness.

Official figures showed South Korea's consumer price index rose 2.1 per cent in January, the highest monthly increase since June 1981.

Sluggish export performance and higher oil prices drove energy-importing South Korea's customs-cleared trade deficit to a record \$1.71 billion last month.

Lee Jin-Seol, vice minister of the Economic Planning Board, was appointed construction minister and Rhee Hai-Won, former health minister, was named mayor of Seoul.

The reshuffle was announced as the Seoul district prosecutor's office announced results of a 10-day probe into what local newspapers called the biggest scandal since Roh took office in February 1988.

Choi Myong-Bu, head of the office's investigation unit, told a news conference eight people, including five ruling and opposition party members of parliament and a senior Roh aide, accepted \$1.3 million worth of bribes from a construction firm to help it gain a lucrative housing project in Seoul.

'3,000 may have died' in New Guinea blockade

SYDNEY (R) — Doctors on the South Pacific Island of Bougainville say 3,000 people may have died because of an economic blockade by the Papua New Guinea (PNG) government, an Australian television programme claimed Monday.

The Papua New Guinea government last May imposed an economic and communications blockade around Bougainville, 800 kilometres northeast of Port Moresby, after being unable to quell a secessionist rebellion on the island.

The doctors told a journalist from the government-financed Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) that they had documented 1,500 deaths from preventable diseases in the past eight months when the blockade starved the island of medical supplies.

"We asked them to complete a

list of deaths from preventable diseases, excluding things like cancer or tuberculosis," SBS journalist Mark Corcoran, who visited Bougainville earlier this month, told Reuters Monday.

"They said they had documented 1,500 deaths, but that this was probably a very conservative estimate."

"They estimated that because of the lack of communication — there are no roads to get outside the towns and villages — that the deaths could reach 3,000."

The Papua New Guinea government was unavailable for comment on the allegations, but on Sunday Prime Minister Rabbie Namaliu said a complaint would be lodged with the Australian government over the SBS trip, which he described as illegal.

Government officials were notified of the trip in advance.

4 activists tortured in Kenya, Amnesty says

LONDON (AP) — Amnesty International is calling for an investigation into allegations that four political activists on trial for sedition in Kenya were tortured.

The four — Ngatho Kariuki, an accountant and former university dean, Edward Oyugi, a university professor, Augustus Kathangu, a local politician and George Anyona, a political activist — are charged with holding a seditious meeting in a bar and possessing seditious material including an issue of "African Confidential," a London-based newsletter.

They face up to 10 years in jail if convicted.

All four defendants have testified that they were tortured, according to Amnesty International, the human rights organisation.

"The government's record of silencing critics by means of torture and unfair trial makes us fear that these four prisoners of conscience may soon be jailed for up to 10 years simply for peacefully expressing their views," Amnesty International said in a statement.

Kariuki told the court in Nairobi that he was starved, beaten, held naked in a dark, flooded cell and forced to sign a false confession at gunpoint. Oyugi testified that he was severely beaten and denied prescription medicines.

"As far as we know, no torture was involved," said a press officer

for the Kenya embassy. "They were simply questioned."

According to international law, statements obtained under torture are not admissible in court proceedings.

"We are appealing to the government to order an independent investigation and confirm that statements made under torture should not be admitted into evidence," said Martin Hill, a spokesman for Amnesty International. "Allegations of torture and denial of medical treatment have consistently been overlooked by the judiciary in Kenya."

Hill said that the defendants were drinking in a bar when they were arrested.

"The government heard that they were all together and decided that if they were together, it must be seditious," he said. "The government frequently uses sedition charges against its critics and critical publications whose circulation it wants to stop."

Arresting officers testified that they did not know what the four were talking about nor where they asked to investigate why the men were together.

Kariuki, Anyona, Oyugi and Kathangu were among hundreds arrested in Nairobi last July after riots erupted when the government outlawed a public calling for the legalisation of political parties.

Rebels kill 44 Sri Lankan soldiers

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil guerrillas killed 44 soldiers in the worst single attack on Sri Lankan security forces since the rebels began their fight for a separate state in 1983, military sources said Monday.

More than 200 members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) lay in wait for two platoons of soldiers in the remote village of Kodaichchi in north-west Mannar district Sunday, the sources said.

"The Tigers set off some landmines and then opened fire. There was an exchange of fire lasting about 20 minutes. Our troops virtually got wiped out," one officer said.

Two officers were among the 44 dead. Eight soldiers were wounded.

"The soldiers were marching on an open stretch of road with overgrown paddy (rice) fields on either side when they were ambushed," a military officer said.

Despite new hopes, peace remains an illusion in Colombia

BOGOTA (AP) — When Cesar Gaviria became Colombia's president six months ago, he faced the daunting, some say impossible, task of controlling his country's murderous drug cartel and facying its leftist insurgency.

But few could have predicted the price Gaviria was willing to pay. And apparently to no avail.

With a 450-pound (200-kilogramme) bomb exploding outside Medellin's bullring Saturday evening, killing 22 and injuring 140, the goal seemed even more unreachable.

The president's critics say Colombia has begun sacrificing its principles only to be racked by more murders, kidnappings and bombings.

Saturday's blast, which local radio stations were attributing to drug traffickers, underscored the difficulty of trying to make deals with murderers.

Indeed, the government's enticements to outlaw groups have led several Medellin cocaine smugglers to surrender and convinced leftist rebel outfits to trade peace for amnesty.

Gaviria's predecessor, Virgilio

Barco, launched a major offensive against the traffickers when Sen. Luis Carlos Galan, the front-running presidential candidate, was assassinated in August 1989 by gunmen employed by drug traffickers.

In the following 12 months, Barco's administration allowed 22 drug suspects to be extradited to the United States, killed Medellin cartel leader Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, and confiscated hundreds of properties belonging to the cocaine magnates.

A Gaviria-supported panel is meeting to rewrite the constitution, stirring new hopes for national reconciliation.

But peace? Nowhere to be seen in this nation of 32 million inhabitants wracked by bloody warfare involving drug barons and insurgents. The last two months have been among the most violent in the country's history.

Broad offensives by Colombia's two remaining rebel groups, the National Liberation Army, or ELN, and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the FARC, has killed at least 350 people this year.

The Medellin drug gang recently shot an elderly woman six times in the face and murdered a prominent magazine publisher.

The victims, Marina Montoya and Diana Turbay, had been taken hostage by the cartel to pressure the government to grant concessions.

Authorities suspected that cocaine traffickers may have been behind Saturday's carnage in southern Medellin which killed policemen and spectators on their way home from the last bullfight of the season.

The killing seems an unlikely response to Gaviria's wooing of traffickers with offers of lenient treatment and promises not to send them to the United States to face trial.

Three Medellin cartel leaders, brothers Fabio, Juan David and Jorge Luis Ochoa, have surrendered under Gaviria's offer to end extraditions and reduce jail sentences to drug traffickers who turn themselves in.

Juan David gave himself up in the northern city of Turbo just a few hours before Saturday's fatal blast.

If the brothers confess at least one crime and behave themselves in jail, they will serve a maximum of 10 years, said Ana Montez, a national court official.

But given drug traffickers' proven ability to bribe, threaten or kill penal authorities, their sentences could well be far less, analysts say.

The cartel's top leader, billionaire Pablo Escobar, isn't planning to surrender at all, said a confidential police report recently published.

Instead, said the report, the drug boss plans to use his considerable influence to intimidate members of the Constitutional Assembly to ban extraditions.

Several of the assembly's 73 delegates, led by former Medellin Mayor Juan Gomez, already have proposed such a ban.

Despite government efforts to bolster the judicial system, there is reason to believe Colombian courts are not yet ready to withstand drug smugglers' intimidation.

Gonzalo Mejia, one of five mid-level traffickers to surrender under Gaviria's leniency plan,

was mysteriously released from jail last month after having served only 44 days.

The United States has publicly supported Gaviria's new strategy. But U.S. officials have privately expressed their concern that Colombia is going soft in the drug war.

Even on the guerrilla front, Gaviria has backslid from previous positions in an apparent effort to stop the rebels from attacking army units, blowing up electrical towers and invading small towns.

The government recently announced that rebels could become non-voting members of the Constitutional Assembly even if they didn't lay down their weapons, a reversal of previous policy.

The current rebel offensive has killed hundreds of Colombians and cost an estimated billion dollars in losses to the economy.

The guerrillas say they are retaliating for the army's bombing and capture in early December of the FARC's jungle headquarters in southern Colombia and have no intention of surrendering.

COLUMN

Athletes tie knot on soggy beach

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AP) — Two British triathletes say they could not think of a nicer way to get married than on a soggy beach on a murky afternoon after competing in one of New Zealand's most grueling events. Ken MacLaren, 29, of Wales, and Ali Hollington, 26, of Essex, say the venue for their wedding was "made in heaven."

"Of course, it would have been nice had it been fine, but we were more worried about the effect of the weather on our performances than on what it would do to the wedding," MacLaren said. Both wanted a no-fills affair. The barefooted bride sported a navy-hooded sweatshirt, which matched the groom's, and navy-and-white-striped shorts, which contrasted with her husband's floral pair. "We're both very casual people and it was just the sort of wedding we wanted," Hollington said. The wedding got under way about an hour late. The trying weather conditions delayed some finishers in the triathlon, and the pair fitted in their ceremony so as not to curtail the post-race celebrations at a local hotel. Although they were happy with the wedding, MacLaren was disappointed with his performance in the event. "I had a lousy race and I can't blame the wedding because I didn't start thinking about that until I crossed the line," he said. Hollington, who finished about mid-field, said the rough sea and the bleak, blustery conditions also caused his problems. "The brakes on my bike weren't working when I went round some of the corners and it was on my mind that I had to get back in one piece."

Soccer star charged with theft

ATHENS (R) — Romanian soccer star Ramut Lupu, who played for Greek first division champions Panathinaikos, was charged with theft, receiving and selling stolen goods and unlawful entry, police said. They said Lupu, 23, was arrested and charged with six other men in connection with a ring accused of breaking into homes and stores to steal furs and other clothes. He signed with Panathinaikos last year.

DJ fired over fake report of attack

ST. LOUIS (AP) — John Ulett, a rock station disc jockey who broadcast a fake report of a nuclear attack, has been fired as public address announcer for the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team. Ulett, 31, confirmed that he will not be retained by the National League team for the 1991 season, ending an eight-year stint.

Ulett aired a report on radio station KSHE on Jan. 29 that the United States was under nuclear attack after several callers suggested the United States use nuclear weapons on Iraq to hasten the end of Gulf war, he said. At the time, Ulett said he played the fake warning to make people think about the horrors of nuclear war. The station suspended him for a week and the incident is being investigated by the Federal Communications Commission. FCC Chairman Alfred C. Sikes said that the potential penalties range from a fine to revocation of the station's broadcast licence.

Private detective sues Trump